

## Hindsight

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## Hindsight

by [elephreak](#)

### Summary

In hindsight he knows that he saw this coming. He recognised the signs with more than enough time to have alerted May, or anyone on what he knew was progressing. But in the end, he just really wanted it to not be true. Just to be a figment of his paranoid over-reactive teenage mind, conjuring up the worst possible scenario. Maybe he had just seen it so much out on the streets as Spiderman that he was bringing it home with him, still seeing the darkness in those kinds of people's eyes... in the way they moved and spoke. Or maybe he had just assumed that the blearing alarms of his spider-sense from the moment he shook hands with the guy was just aftershocks of the armed robbery he had just wrapped up only moments ago.

Hindsight can be a real bitch sometimes.

OR

The one where Peter is being abused in the worst way

### Notes

This fic will be very dark as it progresses so please mind the tags and warnings.

# Chapter 1

In hindsight he knows that he saw this coming. He recognised the signs with more than enough time to have alerted May, or anyone on what he knew was progressing. But in the end, he just really wanted it to not be true. Just to be a figment of his paranoid over-reactive teenage mind, conjuring up the worst possible scenario. Maybe he had just seen it so much out on the streets as Spiderman that he was bringing it home with him, still seeing the darkness in those kinds of people's eyes... in the way they moved and spoke. Or maybe he had just assumed that the blearing alarms of his spider-sense from the moment he shook hands with the guy was just aftershocks of the armed robbery he had just wrapped up only moments ago.

Hindsight can be a real bitch sometimes.

May was never supposed to spend her life alone, he knew that. He knew eventually she would bring someone into their home. When he thought about who was going to make them a three again, Grant was the furthest thing from what he imagined.

He never really did hide his distaste for Peter, and Peter never really understood how May never saw that. But then, he never said anything either so could he really blame her?

'Family' dinners Peter spent staring at his plate, half listening to the conversation around him... trying to tune in when he heard words like 'Peter' and 'School' and 'Stark internship', but even those conversations seemed to fizzle out quickly once Grant steered the topic back away from Peter.

In the beginning Peter was offended, and then over time he became thankful to not have the attention on him at all. No attention meant he couldn't possibly say the wrong thing or have the wrong attitude.

Wrong things and wrong attitudes brought hissed threats when May was away from ear shot. Threats about how his teenage behaviours wouldn't be excused anymore. How "being a prick will only get you hit Peter, so watch your mouth".

The first time Grant had held his shirt and pushed into the wall of the hallway, telling him how 'things are changing from now' and 'Your aunt doesn't deserve your shit' and 'you're an embarrassment to yourself', Peter had been dumbstruck.

He knew Grant didn't like him, but he had been civil up until then. He had been polite and he had let May gush and gossip about this great man who finally saw the real her and liked it. How finally she didn't feel alone anymore. And frankly, that stung more than anything Grant would ever say.

Had he not realised how lonely May had been? Was he not enough to make her happy?

So, he kept his mouth shut and agreed with May over how Grant indeed was a great catch, because May had never seen the vicious stares thrown across the room, or the sarcastic comments whenever Peter spoke about something he was interested in. She never questioned that Peter spent more time in his room when Grant was over, and only spoke when spoken to at the table.

So of course, when she told him that Grant was moving in after 8 months of a seemingly perfect relationship, he had to pretend to be happy for them both.

But then Grant got more physical.

And May started working more to help with the added person in the house.

If he couldn't stop it before he was Spiderman, he shouldn't be able to stop it now right?

So here he lay. On the couch nursing what was now a bruised rib, and what would be by the morning, a mere shadow on his chest.

He had of course, forgotten to pack up his bag and strewn out books from the coffee table. And of course, that was deserving of the punch delivered to his ribs, and the spittle on his face as he was reminded yet again of his teenage antics and questionable intelligence.

Peter closed his eyes to hide the eye roll and bit his lip to stop from defending himself from this jerk. He knew it had been going on too long now. There was no point in going for help now. Why hadn't he called out a year ago when he first met the guy and had a bad feeling? Or 6 months ago when Grant had just moved in delivered the first slap of many to come as punishment for coming in late and missing dinner.

Honestly? He couldn't explain why he hadn't either.

May was still happy: rose coloured glasses and all. There was more food on the table every night, and the fridge didn't have that depressing emptiness anymore. Two incomes were always better than one.

Only, Grants work was early mornings to late afternoon, while May was working mostly nights. Meaning it was just Peter and Grant in the house from 6pm until early hours of the morning when May would come home and by that time the damage was already done and healing under the covers with an ice pack and a couple of aspirins.

Tonight was a better outcome than other nights. Keeping it only localised to his chest meant he didn't have to work to cover it up if the bruising hadn't faded. Being Spiderman always helped when a bruise was too deep to go down by the next morning, and May stared at him with wide eyes and barely concealed agony on behalf of her nephew who was trying to save the world, one petty criminal at a time.

Tony was also easy to keep in the dark with 'Spiderman' excuses. When his eyes would flicker up with worry at a cut on his cheekbone (from the ring on Grants right hand), or when Peter would flinch if Tony raised his voice at an inanimate object in the lab (yelling always meant pain). Sometimes Peter even threw in Flash getting a bit rough for good measure, just in case Tony actually one day followed up on an injury on the baby monitor protocol. Which only led to Tony ranting for an hour about the failures of the schooling system and how nothing had changed from when he was in school and why did Peter have to have such a self-sacrificing hero complex?

Peter thinks about Tony often when he is nursing an injury. How easy it would be to just call him and say the words. He knows Tony would be there in break neck speeds with a repulsor aimed at Grants head. It gives him some comfort knowing Tony would believe him and help him.

But then he thinks of May's face when Grant buys her flowers at the end of the day, or how she doesn't have those bags under her eyes anymore, and he puts his phone back down and stares at the roof some more.

"You know Peter, you would think after over a year you wouldn't be making such stupid mistakes anymore. I know you haven't had any discipline in your life. Obviously not from your parents, and definitely not from your Uncle. You're lucky to have me."

Peter winces at that but doesn't let it show. Grant's just had too many beers and wants to be cruel.

"I know May is wrapped around your little finger, so she would never tell you what she really thinks" Grant continues in a casual tone. "But she tells me. Tells me how much better you are since

I came in. How for once you're actually useful."

Humiliated tears are building in Peters eyes, so he shuts them quickly and turns his face more towards the back of the couch.

"So maybe for once you could be grateful that I'm actually bothering to help you at all."

Peter stays quiet. Clenching his jaw, trying to not show how much the words affect him.

"Or maybe I haven't done enough if you're still being a brat and spitting the dummy" he growls now, and Peter knows that's his cue to say something, but he's so goddamn tired and his ribs are aching, so he keeps his eyes shut and his mouth shut and doesn't make a sound.

Of course, having his eyes shut turns out to not be his smartest move because he doesn't see Grant leap up and grab a handful of hair on Peters head.

Peter shoots up with a shriek, the hand unmoving, and his hair pulling excruciatingly at his scalp. His hands reach up to loosen the hold and his legs kick up but Grants too strong, and suddenly he's being dragged.

His body hits the ground painfully and he whines at the added assault to his ribs, but Grant's still pulling him by the hair, dragging him further into the house until he stops abruptly and pulls more harshly, forcing Peter up onto his knees and then even higher, until hes colliding painfully against something... the dining table his pain riddled mind supplies.

He's still reeling from the shock of the abrupt action when his aching torso is shoved down on the table top, legs unsuccessfully scrambling for purchase underneath him. The hand holding his hair brings his head up and slams it straight back down into the table.

Peter feels his noes crack painfully and his mouth fill with blood, he cries out louder as the hand lifts again, but this time he manages to turn his neck slightly to avoid his nose being crushed on second impact, so it's his forehead that takes the brunt, and takes it again as Grant repeats the action.

By now he's reduced to a keening, withering, sobbing mess on the dining table. His blood puddling and splashing as he hits the table again and again. His face a wreck of blood, snot and tears as he tries to focus on even trying to protect himself.

But he can't. His head is spinning, and the pain is overwhelming, so he just slumps as the hand finally retreats from his head. Now there's nothing supporting him he falls to the ground in a heap, curling protectively around his face and stomach. His shoulders shaking, and eyes glazed, still staring accusingly at Grant.

Grant merely drops to a squat in front of Peters face, conveniently his foot stepping on Peters hand, and Peter lets out another shriek as his hand is crushed under the weight. The hand is back in his hair lifting his face up again and drawing his neck back painfully to meet the unavoidable gaze of Grants dark face.

"Next time I speak to you Peter I expect you to answer me." He says calmly. Peter wouldn't be able to take it if it started again so he manages a weak nod with the hair still pulling his hair with such force that Peter can feel the strands starting to give and rip. His tears are blurring his vision and Grants becoming more of a black shadow than a person, but maybe that's the concussion he's now positive he is sporting.

"Now you can thank me for yet again having to teach you your manners Peter." Grant continues, and Peters vision clears just enough to see the threat in Grants eyes. His mouth opens and closes uselessly and finally captures the word he's been aiming to conjure.

"Th- Thank you" he grits out, his vision swimming again and he starts to think he might actually pass out. The hand finally let's go and he watches the blur of feet walking away before he succumbs to the pull of the darkness.

...

When he comes to, its pitch black in the house and his face feels like he's been hit with a baseball bat. It only takes a couple of seconds to remember how he got to his position, and another couple of seconds to blink off the tears that have begrudgingly returned to his eyes.

Peter shakes his head to try and stop the ringing in his ears and manages to gently twist his body so that his arms are underneath him and he can push himself onto his knees. The room spins around him, and he needs to blink a few more times to wane off the feeling of dizziness and nausea.

He doesn't know how long it takes to move from his knees to his feet, gripping the chairs for support as he stands up as best as he can.

The ringing in his ears has simmered down to a buzzing, and it takes him a moment to realise it's not his ears making that noise but his phone, still on the couch and flashing insistently.

Peter wobbles over and falls, catching himself on the back of the sofa, trying again to clear the dizziness from his head. Concussion, he remembers.

He scans the room quickly and notes that Grant isn't around. How long had he been unconscious for? He picks up his phone, squinting at the bright light before he sees its just past 10.00pm. He was lying on the floor for over an hour. Vaguely he registers that head injuries and prolonged unconsciousness are very dangerous, but he's got a healing factor to help wipe the worry from his mind.

He clutches the phone in his hand and makes his way towards his room, making a detour to the bathroom to clean the blood off his face.

He startles a bit when he sees his reflection, the bruising already a dark black around his eye and cheekbone. Crusted blood sticks in his eyebrow where the skin had split, as well as his cheek, and lip. The half of his face exposed to the violence is puffy and a range of colours, the other half seemingly only affected by his tears and some smears of blood that had run from the other side.

His attention goes to his nose and he feels around cautiously at the bone and sighs in relief when he finds its not broken. He looks at his fingers while they hover in front of his face and notes that his ring and middle fingers are slightly askew, so broken, but not enough to panic about.

Peter looks at the shower contemplating his best method of clean up. But one step closer to the curtain has him seeing stars and he decides that slipping in the shower is not ideal if he passes out again and settles for an old towel and the sink.

Grant's getting more aggressive. This is the first time Peters walked away with a concussion and the first time blood has been drawn at such an aggressive rate. Usually it's a small droplet when the ring catches his cheek, or if Peter accidentally bites his own tongue or cheek when a blow comes, so it's only his own fault when that happens.

But this time he's acutely aware of the volume of blood that swirling down the sink and seeping into the towel and a prickly fear descends upon his spine. If Grants moving from gut punches, shoves and the occasional heavy-handed slap to almost causing a brain injury and breaking bones, then Peters in more danger than he thought.

He remembers suddenly that Grant doesn't know he's Spiderman, so he has no idea that Peter is stronger and can heal faster, and if Peter didn't have his powers he might be dead now from such a brutal force to his head. Another shiver works its way through his body.

Has he let it go too far? Is it time to call for help?

Not tonight Peter decides. Tonight he just wants to curl up and sleep and pray to whatever that when he wakes up the swelling has gone down completely. Hiding a tortured face is extremely difficult. Not to mention tomorrow is a Friday, so a school day and a lab day with Tony.

Head injuries would call for him to check Peter's Spiderman feed, and if Peter says it's Flash again, Tony might not agree to let this kind of aggravated assault go lightly and involve the school.

Fuck.

Peter's anxiety starts to stir, his mind coming up with other alternatives to cover for himself. Maybe he shouldn't cover and just come clean? Yeah. Maybe this time it's gone too far and he needs Tony to make it better. His mind is too hurt and reeling to think any further on the matter, so he finds his way back to his room clumsily and falls into his bed.

Remembering his phone alerts earlier he reaches out to check his notifications... ignoring the texts from Ned about school gossip and zoning into the two missed calls from Tony and the text message accompanying them.

Peter frowns and opens the message, and reads it slowly, eyes still straining at the light.

T.S: Hey Pete, stopped by earlier to see you, I noticed you accidentally left your homework assignment in the lab the other day and I know the due date was tomorrow, so just dropped by to give it to you. Gave it to Grant. Sorry I didn't catch you. See you tomorrow.

Peter reads the message again. God, he wished that May had found someone like Tony. Or even just ended up with Tony himself. A warm feeling swells in his chest and before he realises what he's doing, his phone was calling Tony.



Tony answers on the third ring.

“Hey Pete, decided to actually check your phone huh?” he chuckled. Peter could hear the soft sound of papers rustling in the background.

“Why are you still working? It’s like 11pm” he can hear Tony scoff and the papers stop moving. “You and your great hearing. I’m an adult I can work as long as I like. You are the child, why are *you* still awake kid?” his tone brings a smile to Peter’s face, which he instantly regrets as his muscles pull painfully. He doesn’t realise he’s let out a sound until Tony’s slightly more alarmed voice rings through.

“What was that? Are you hurt? Did something happen on patrol?” His concern is clear and Peter replies without thinking.

“Didn’t go on patrol tonight” he instantly realises he can’t now use Spiderman as an excuse tomorrow if the bruising hasn’t gone down, so he hastily adds,

“But I’m fine, misjudged a jump yesterday, ate the concrete, still recovering”. The lie slips off his tongue easily, and he cringes again. He was planning on speaking up tomorrow about what he had endured tonight, but he’s just shot his chance at that now.

Tony groans down the line “Jesus kid, can you please try to be a bit more careful when you are out there, you’re going to give your old man a heart attack”. Peter pauses at that. Tony just referred to himself as his father. Peter feels like he should be a little weirded out by that, but instead he’s filled with a happiness he didn’t think he was capable of feeling.

He knows he’s hesitated too long and Tony is probably freaking out at the omission on the other end, so he quickly jokes “my clumsiness is not what’s going to give you a heart attack Mr. coffee is a well-balanced meal and I don’t need food for 72 hours”

He can almost feel Tony’s relief on the other end “how dare you, it was only 60 hours before *someone* tattle tailed on me and forced a, might I add, delicious, sandwich on me”.

Peter laughs at the memory, and this time he can ignore the twinge in his ribs and the ache in his face. He knew Tony would always make him feel better.

“Anyway kid it is late, make sure you don’t forget to get your assignment off Grant.” Tony chides,

and follows it up with “Wait if you weren’t on patrol why were you out so late tonight? I popped over around 9 and he said you were out?”

Peter reels at that, his mind going into a frenzy. “You were at the apartment only 2 hours ago?” Tony was in the apartment while Peter was sprawled out unconscious covered in blood only meters away. Suddenly he wants this conversation to be over.

Before Tony gets a chance to respond to his question he butts in “Yeah I was at Neds. Thanks again for coming by. Goodnight Tony.” He hangs up as he hears the confused stuttering, but he can’t listen anymore.

Tony had been so close. If he had walked further than the front door he would have had a direct eye line with the dining room where Peter was. Peter feels bile rising in his throat at the fact that his saving grace had been right there, and it had slipped away. Its bittersweet.

Peter falls asleep ignoring the tears that are sliding down and sodding his pillow and tries to hold on to the happiness he felt when Tony called himself his father. It works just enough to pull him under into sleep.

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## Chapter 2

### Chapter Notes

Again, please mind the tags for any triggering content. Dark themes of abuse and assault. This story has a lot more hurt and dark before it gets any better.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

In the morning when Peter stares at his reflection he decides he'd rather be safe than sorry. Turns out the bruising didn't fade overnight, and actually deepened in colour. Dark blues, blacks and purples now inking his right side, the cuts clearly having been reopened in the night and have scabbed grotesquely.

He hurries back into bed when he hears May's bedroom door open and waits for her to come into his room. Lying on his right side in the hopes of shielding his bruised face he watches blearily as she approaches his bed.

"Peter! Why haven't you got dressed yet? You're going to be late" she fusses, coming closer to the bed and getting ready to pull the doona down.

Peter grips it tightly and groans "May I think I might have got food poisoning from the deli yesterday, I've been vomiting my guts out all night. I'm just gonna stay home if that's okay?" He hopes she buys it, he knows she will but hopefully she doesn't push it and want to see him in the light.

"Oh honey. How does this always happen to you. Okay I'll give the school a call... do you want me to stay home with you today?" He quickly stops her "no May you go, I'm just going to sleep for a while."

She buys his lie, kisses him on the forehead tenderly and heads out for the day. He knows Grants already gone to work so he feels like he can finally relax. Getting up he trudges to the kitchen, pulling a bag of frozen peas out of the freezer and tentatively pushing them into his aching cheek, hissing at the chill.

He walks out to the dining area and notices his blood has been cleaned up. It makes him feel like laughing, thinking about Grant actually having to clean up something for once. Guess he really doesn't want May knowing about what happens when she's out.

Peter remembers when the physical abuse had begun, how he argued and demanded to know what he could have possibly done to deserve this. He used to threaten to kick Grant out and tell May about what was happening, but somehow Grant always knew how to make him keep his mouth shut.

Threats back about May, how Peter would be ruining her happiness, threats about if he left he would take everything, leave them practically in poverty and how May would be ruined. Peter always considers this idea. Thinking about how May has been able buy a new car since Grant has moved in, and the food, and how she dresses in clothes that are new and not years old.

Its materialistic, but Peter knows the kind of life that May has lived for the past 10 years, looking after a kid that wasn't hers and then losing the love of her life. It's stupid and he's so staggeringly aware of the position he's put himself in for something so small like a new dress. But the guilt that he's always held close to his heart has lessened just a bit and the weight of what he's caused feels like it's coming off his shoulders.

And a whole other weight has replaced it.

He doesn't remember falling asleep on the couch, and when he wakes it's to a nagging buzz at the back of his neck making all his hair stand on end.

When he opens his eyes, he knows why.

Grant's sitting on the coffee table watching him with an intensity that makes Peters stomach roll in thick waves.

Peter sits up slowly, keeping his eyes trained on Grant, unsure of what his next move was going to be.

Grant stays silent, but his eyes are trained on the bruising on Peters face, surveying the damage intently.

Squirming with sudden scrutiny Peter looks for his exit, scrambling for a way to get to his room and lock the door. Grant never just stares. Grant hits and yells and leaves Peter bleeding and unconscious while he talks to Peters mentor 5 feet away.

Grant senses that Peters getting ready to move and throws an arm out, gripping Peters wrist tightly. "You never really do hold bruises do you Pete" he comments.

Peters nerves sizzle again, reaching for a medical reason to explain his healing factor but comes up blank, he wants to just stay silent, but he's so horribly aware of the reason that he was brutalised last night was for not answering questions like these.

"I've always just healed fast... resilient skin" he mutters. *Obviously useful for you* he wants to add, but Grant just hums and continues staring. It's such a foreign situation and his mind is racing for an explanation. Maybe Grant wanted to apologise.

He's doubtful.

Instead Grant hums again and stands up walking into the kitchen. Peters releases a breath he didn't realise he was holding and skitters back into his bedroom.

Why was that so weird?

Why had Grant just stared? He didn't even make demands or insult. Just stared and left.

Peters mind is still coming up with blanks trying to understand, so he packs his bag and sneaks out the window, making his way over to the lab. The safe haven he needs right now.

By the time he gets to the tower, the bruises have faded to green and yellow, dark spots only litter on his forehead and around the still scabbed cuts. He knows he's going to get an earful from Tony, but the excitement of being back in the lab still overrides any cautions he holds.

Tony is of course, worried as expected.

"Kid you look like you were in a fight... how high did you fall from" his tone is teasing but the protectiveness is too strong to even try and cover.

“Not that high... I was just going too fast and didn’t see my web hadn’t attached to anything. I’m more embarrassed than actually hurt” a lie always sounds better with some extra emotions he thinks. Tony hums but he’s pushing Peter down onto a stool and tipping his chin to get a better look. “Do you think you hurt anything else? Other than your pride?”

Peter rolls his eyes at that but decides to take the opportunity to get advice on the other injuries “I think I might have broken my fingers a bit, I didn’t get around to resetting them though.” He holds up his two fingers for emphasis and Tony winces.

“And I might have got a bit of a concussion... I still feel a little dizzy if I’m honest” he adds meekly already watching Tony’s eyebrows raise and his mother hen accelerates.

“Lord, I need to put bubble wrap in your suit. Why didn’t Karen alert me? I have protocols for serious injury” He turns, probably to pull up a hologram of Karen’s coding, but Peter is quick to intervene.

“I didn’t think it was serious at the time! I had no side effects until I got home! Seriously Mr. Stark, Karen is perfect don’t worry about her.” Peter’s getting a little desperate, a scan of the code would reveal no such injury happened and more questions would lead to places Peter didn’t feel like going to right now. The ‘Mr. Stark’ seems to do the trick though.

“Okay kid... just – can you please just call me next time. You’ve obviously been hurt for over a day and I could have helped you with some of this.” Tony sighs. He’s gesturing to the hands, but Peter feels like Tony’s seen right through him and lets himself pretend that he’s talking about what really happened.

“I will, I promise. Can you fix these or am I going to have to give up my career as a lead pianist?” Peter teases. Tony’s smile feels a lot more genuine now, not so upset.

“Let me find a way to remove my ears before you plan your musical debut please, champ”

And that’s that. Tony fixes his fingers and they work until the sun goes down, then they drive back to Peter’s home.

Peter stays in the car just a moment too long, staring up at the apartment. Time with Tony had been really good. Tony was the only father figure that Peter needed. Not the lowlife asshole upstairs who Peter knew was waiting for Peter to return.

Tony looked at him strangely. “You okay kiddo? Do you want me to walk you up?” Peter jerks out of his thoughts and looks down. This is his chance. ‘hey Tony, Grants being pushing me around a lot and last night I think he could have actually killed me’, but he just takes a breath and smiles tightly.

“All good, I’m just thinking about that new web fluid we were working on today.” Peter can hear how unconvincing he sounds and even Tony grimaces at the lie, but he let’s Peter have it.

“Alright Pete, just remember to call me if your hurt or need anything at all, okay?” and Peter nods, letting himself be pulled into the one-armed hug.

“Not a hug, right?” Peter smirks.

“Just getting the door” Tony scoffs back.

Peter waves a quick goodbye as he jogs up to the apartment. He braces himself momentarily before pushing the door open.

The apartment is quiet when he walks in, and the now ever-present tingling at the back of his neck flares slightly.

He closes the door softly behind himself, walking two steps into the apartment. Before he can even brace himself a figure rushes towards him, hands wrapping around his throat. Peter lets out a yelp before grabbing onto the hands, getting ready to pry them off until he realises who’s attached to them.

Grants face is seemingly more sinister in this light, his eyes flashing a dark black, sweat already gathering in his brow. Peter can smell the distinctive beer odour, noting to memory that Grants been consuming more alcohol each day than he ever has before.

“You think you can just sneak out of here, boy?” Grant seethes. Peters still fighting for the small window of oxygen he grasps when the hands loosen ever so slightly.

“You just go behind my back and do whatever the hell you please for hours? You think I’m some sort of joke huh? Think you can get away with this shit you little punk?” Grants voice raising with

every word. His hands tighten again on Peters throat, cutting off the airflow once more.

Peter gapes and struggles against the wall where he's pinned. He's slapping uselessly on the hands, clawing and grabbing, knowing that his strength could pry the hands apart.

But then Grant would know.

And Grant could never know.

So Peter takes it.

He's sure he's going to pass out, his head is building with pressure, his lungs burning with the need for air. Grants eyes are wild, hardening alongside his hands.

Peter's watching the blackspots dance across his vision, his effort to move the hands have become sluggish. Even if he decided now to use his powers, he's not sure he could. He wonders mildly if this was how he was going to die. Watching Grants eyes as he faded away.

His mind drifts to May, to Tony, to those he's loved. Would they think he was stupid for not standing up to this bully?

Peter closes his eyes as his swarming vision descends to black, but just as he feels his body start to fall the hands are gone. His body crumbling into the floor is enough to help clear some of the black spots still clouding his sight. Enough that he can stare up at Grant in shock.

Grant was trying to kill him.

*Again.*

"I- I don't..." Peter tries to ask, *I don't understand why you're doing this. What have I done?* But his throat can't formulate the words, they stick and fade away. Only problem with accelerated healing is that it also accelerates the life of the injury, and Peter can feel the swelling and bruising closing up his throat.



Grant grabs him by the shoulders of his shirt, heaving him off the floor and pushing him against the wall once more.

Peter thinks about what will happen if Grant reaches for his throat again. Thinks about the feeling of fading away. He doesn't want to feel that again. He reaches out weakly to push the arms that are pinning him to the wall away, frustrated that his strength always seems to go missing when Grants around. Fear apparently makes him as weak as he was before the bite.

A punch delivered to the side of his face – the still bruised side - ends his struggling and he relents into the strong arms holding him up. He tries to hold back the tears that are brimming in his eyes, but the pain in his neck, the pain in his face and the fear in his stomach are all too much and he feels the first tear slip down his cheek.

Grant's only using his forearm now to pin Peter to the wall, his other hand reaches up to Peters face in a strange contrast of affection. Peter flinches as the hand comes towards his face, but Grant pushes down on Peter harder, his neck screams under the pressure.

The hand falls on Peters face, gently. Grant swipes the wetness on Peters cheek where his tears are gathered. His cold calloused hand rubs the moisture deeper into the skin of Peters cheek, earning a weak hiss as he thumbs the bruise still stubbornly residing on his cheek.

Peters trying to keep his breathing under control. The arm is only causing a slight strain in his ability to breathe, alongside his swollen neck, but the proximity and the strangeness of Grants actions is too overwhelming. He hears himself whimper as Grant leans even closer to his face, hot alcohol breath fanning out on Peters cheek.

Peters got his head slightly turned, his eyes scanning the room behind Grants head for anything. Something to help him, something to distract him from the terror right in front of him.

Grants hand grips tighter on Peters jaw, yanking his head back to stare directly at each other. Peters eyes are still frantically darting, looking for an escape now. He doesn't know where this is going. Does Grant want to see him up close as he tries to kill him again? Is this just another form of intimidation?

Grant's still not saying anything, which makes Peter uneasy. All he can hear is his own short breaths, which are starting to sound more like wheezes. Grants eyes are scanning his face for something, Peters not sure of what exactly.

“Grant... please” Peter whimpers. He’s not sure what he’s begging for. His life? For Grant to let him go? For an explanation into whatever the hell is going on? For Grant to stop staring at him so intently, causing his blood to curl and stomach to knot?

All of the above actually.

After another moment Grant relents, but not without a final cruel shove that send Peters head slamming into the wall, and his body yet again slumping to the floor.

“Next time, you ask fucking permission before going wherever the hell you go, you hear me?” Grant voice is cold, his eyes boring into Peters, a different intensity from the one only moments before.

Peter manages a hesitant nod before Grants stomping away. Peter waits for the sound of beer bottles rattling in the fridge as another one is taken out and then slips into his room, shutting the door quietly behind himself.

He falls to the floor (apparently his new residence) with his back against the door and begins to sob. He puts his head between his knees and rides out the sobs wracking his body. There’s no sound. He’s not sure if that because of his swollen windpipe or from practice.

...

Peter doesn’t see Grant for 3 days after that. He spends his weekend bouncing between the library where he studies and writes up ideas for his suit, and patrolling, coming through his bedroom window late enough to be sure everyone is asleep. On Monday all of his bruises, including the thick black rings around his neck, have faded into nothing so he can go back to school.

He’s socially awkward enough as it is for nobody to question his resigned attitude. He turns over in his head images of Grants face as he had leaned in close, caressing Peters face. He goes through every superficial injury Grants given him these past 6 months and compares that to the last two.

Grant is definitely escalating. But why? Peter tries to think if anything has changed recently, but his mind is coming up with blanks. Mostly he’s just thinking about how school is finishing up come Friday for the Summer, and he’s going to have to figure out how to avoid the house as much as he can over those 3 months.

He also doesn't really want to be avoiding May, but he decides 3 months is better than forever if Grant actually succeeds in killing him.

Over the week he sees Grant only for a couple of minutes at a time ... usually as he's running out the door, always now hastily offering a quick explanation as to where he's going. But most of the week he slips in the window in the dead of night, and leaves earlier than everyone in the house just to be sure he won't be stuck in the same room as Grant again.

On Saturday morning after breakfast he sits with May on the couch, nursing a cup of tea while she sips her coffee. The TV is on soft enough for Peter to be able to listen to both the morning weekend news, and the sound of the shower running where Grant is safely away from him for now. Peter prefers it when he knows exactly where Grant is.

May talks about mindless things for a while, and Peter keeps up with her idle chatter. She eventually turns more towards him, her eyes scanning his face. Peter feels himself shrink under her gaze.

"You know I'm not a complete idiot Pete" May says casually enough to not sound accusing, but with enough force that Peter whips his head in confusion to face her.

"I have noticed you're avoiding the house lately. I barely saw you at all this week. What's going on kiddo?" She reaches her hand out and places it on his arm gently. Peter has to stop himself from pushing into the touch. He appreciates warm touches so much more recently. He quickly focuses on the question and tries to think of a good enough excuse

"I'm not avoiding, I've just been really busy May, you know, with school finishing up and all" he gives May a small smile and hopes it's enough.

She tuts her tongue as if she knows there's more to it. "You know you can come to me if something's bothering you kiddo. It's not me is it? Or Grant?" Peter tries not to show how his whole body tenses at that. She doesn't seem to notice and continues "I know he's never going to replace Ben, and he's no Tony" She laughs slightly at that, and even Peter cracks a smile "but he is really trying to bond with you, and I've really seen you mature up since you have had a male figure around more consistently".

Peter's not smiling anymore. He looks down to avoid her hopeful eyes. "yeah, I know it's just..." he realises this is his opportunity to get some answers on the sudden shift in aggression "have you noticed he's a bit... on edge lately?" He tries to sound nonchalant enough for her not to grill him on what he's seen, and quickly adds "It's nothing serious, I just noticed he's a bit more subdued

than usual.”

May studies him for a second and sighs “Yeah you’re right. I did want to talk to you about it all this week, but you haven’t really been around...” Peter knows he’s going to get his answers now. Something *has* happened that’s making him hurt Peter.

“He lost his job last week. Made redundant. We’ve got a bit of money from the pay out, but he really liked that job you know, and it means I’m going to have to pick up a couple of double shifts again for a little while until he gets back on his feet.” She looks upset and Peter wants to comfort her, but his head is jumping from word to word.

Grants trying to kill him because he lost his ... job?

That’s it?

He stares at her with disbelief. She continues on “so yeah, he has been a bit more on edge and angry at the world.” She chuckles at that, but suddenly Peters gone cold. Why would May know that? Has he been hurting her too? Had he never noticed he wasn’t the only one getting more hurt.

“May... He’s not...” He says slowly, still trying to find the right words. “He doesn’t, get angry with *you* does he?” He can feel the panic in his chest. May could be getting hurt too, and he would never forgive himself for that.

“What are you asking Pete, of course he gets angry at me sometimes, I get angry right back. That’s how relationships work” She is joking, but he can see her eyes are questioning. “No, I mean, he doesn’t... he doesn’t hurt you when he’s angry does he?”

May looks shocked, but Peter knows he can act that way as well if someone was to catch him out, so instead his eyes zone into her pulse point at her neck, and then back up to her eyes, hoping to see if she’s telling him the truth when she answers.

“God Peter no! Why would you think that? He wouldn’t hurt a fly, leave alone hurt me!” She almost sounds angry, and he suddenly feels stupid for assuming. May wouldn’t let abuse transpire. She’s too strong for that. She would have kicked him out at the first threat.

“I’m sorry May. I’m just still getting used to this all, I want you to be safe.” He tries to amend. Her eyes soften a bit, but she’s still frowning slightly. He feels like he’s really screwed up.

His questions and panic mean he didn't remember to listen for the shower, and suddenly he looks up and see's Grant standing in the door way. His eyes so full of rage Peter almost can't recognise him.

No, now he *definitely* knows he has screwed up.

## Chapter End Notes

Thank you all for your lovely comments and kudos! I have been sitting on this idea since civil war came out, but just finding the time and motivation to write and post!

The next chapter will start to delve into more sexual abuse, so please don't continue this story if you feel this may trigger you in some way.

## Chapter 3

### Chapter Notes

As mentioned in the last chapter, the start of the more sexually focused abuse will begin in this chapter and then progress more graphically in the following. Please be warned and don't read if that will trigger you!

Again thank you for the comments and kuddos! I accidentally wrote 6k for this chap but there was a lot I wanted to get through so enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

It's two days before his punishment comes. Grant had to wait until Monday when May was going back to work. Peter's more afraid of the fact that Grant's got time to plan what he does, rather than act in rage of the moment.

Would that mean he actually follows through with killing him?

But while Grant is given time to brew, so does Peter. And Peter is fucking livid by the time Monday comes around.

How dare this *stranger* come into *his* house and try to kill him. TWICE.

Who the hell did he think he was? Peter was Spiderman for crying out loud. Nobody gets to threaten Peters life and get in the middle of him and May without paying for it.

So he's going to be ready this time.

Except when he steps out of his room into the lounge room, the smell of alcohol is so strong it has him staggering with his enhanced senses.

He shakes his head and makes his way out to seek out Grant first. No more being snuck up on.

Grant's sitting on the couch when Peter approaches him. He clears his throat to get Grants attention. Which works enough for Grant to slightly tilt his head away from the TV and look at

Peter, acknowledging he's there.

"Grant, we need to talk" in Peter's head it sounded more strong, but he knows it comes out more of a question than he'd intended.

Grant seemingly ignores the statement, and instead continues to look at the TV. "Why don't you sit Pete, have a beer."

Peter's eyebrows knit in confusion. "Grant, I'm only 15" why would Grant be offering him a beer? Does he want to talk about it too?

"Sit down Peter." Grant's voice is as strong as Peter wanted his own to be, and he slowly moves to obey, sitting on the other side of the sofa, pushing himself into the arm of the chair in an attempt to be as far away as possible.

Grant chuckles to himself, and Peter feels his cheek warm with embarrassment. Grant slides a glass across the table that Peter didn't even see him pour. "You will like that, just try it. Help you grow some hair on your chest." Peter's confused. He came out here expecting to face the fight head on, not taste test Grant's beverages.

He shakes his head "No thank you, I'd rather not. I wanted to talk to you about-" he's cut off before he can finish. "Try the drink Peter" Grant says it more sternly, but Peter's not interested. He's ready to discuss whatever the hell has been going on between the two of them.

"*Like I said*, I don't want it. Grant just talk to me for a second" he pleads, hating the way his voice sounds so weak. He knows he's scared of what's going to happen, but he keeps his mind focused on the dot points he wants to cover that he scribbled down before walking out here.

"Drink the fucking drink Peter or I swear to God, I'll beat your face in with it!" Grant yells. Peter flinches violently back at the sound and the look that Grant was shooting him with. "Grant, I can't drink, and you know that! This is what I want to talk about, you can't just say shit like that to me" but Grant's not listening to him. He's towering over Peter in seconds, one knee on the couch beside Peter's thigh, and the other balancing on the floor, drink in hand.

His other hand grips Peter's jaw tightly, and Peter whimpers at how fast everything had suddenly changed. In the back of his mind he remembers that he was supposed to fight this time, but his heart is beating too fast and his whole body trembles with anticipation.

Grant lifts the cool glass to the tip of Peters bottom lip. His hand pulls Peters chins slightly forward to angle is face.

“Open your mouth Peter” His voice is quieter now, but still carries the same bite as when he was shouting. Peter shakes his head. He knows he shouldn’t, but he can’t help himself.

“I won’t ask again, Peter” Grant punctuates each word by gripping Peters jaw tighter. Peter can feel the bone start to grind under the pressure, and finally surrenders. His mouth opens just enough for the glass to tip, clinking painfully on his teeth.

His eyes watch Grants, terrified. The liquid is filling his mouth, and he remembers to swallow just before he starts to choke. It burns like fire as it goes down his throat, and his eyes start to water. He’s not sure if that’s from whatever the hell the drink is, or from the fear he’s being consumed by.

It’s not like this is the worst thing Grant has done, but that’s just the thing. It should be worse, which means the worst is yet to come and Peter’s not sure he’s entirely ready to find out what that’s going to be.

He realises that Grant has made him finish the entire drink when the hand suddenly releases his jaw. Peters hand rubs the sore bone and watches Grant cautiously.

Peter’s not worried about getting drunk though, although Grant might expect him to be. He remembers Tony telling about how the Captain couldn’t get drunk after his super-serum and he’d told Peter that he would probably experience the same thing.

He had pat Peters back and said, “*sorry kiddo, looks like your teenage years are going to suck.*” But Peter didn’t think that, never has. What other teenager could say they had Tony Stark as pretty much a fairy Godfather and got to save innocent people each day. Peter would never trade his powers for a little bit of alcohol.

But maybe Tony was wrong. Because Peter’s watching the room start to tilt slightly, and his whole body start to feel... *weird*.

Either that was a really strong drink or Peter actually doesn’t metabolise alcohol at all. But he doesn’t think the latter is true because he knows how fast his metabolism is, and there’s no way he



could be drunk off one glass.

What kind of drink *was* that?

Peter grips the edge of the couch as he tries to regain focus. Grant sits back now staring at Peter. “You know I thought a lot about your conversation with May. You almost blew it didn’t you Peter?” He’s smiling, but it’s more like a shark’s smile. All teeth and no humour.

“But your precious Aunt didn’t even realise what you were really asking did she? I think it goes to show how much she doesn’t really care about you.” He continues. Peter shakes his head. *That’s a lie* he wants to say, *she does loves me*, but he too has been thinking about the conversation. Why *didn’t* May question that he had mentioned Grant being potentially abusive?

He hates himself for believing Grants words. “But she also doesn’t think I could hurt a fly huh? You wanna keep it that way don’t you Pete.” Grant’s leaning closer now, and Peters trying to focus on his words, but his head is feeling like a mist is settling over it.

“What do you mean?” He asks quietly, the words rattling in his head as if he had screamed them. *What is going on?*

“I mean, that if you don’t keep your mouth shut Peter, it won’t just be you that gets hurt.” Peter looks up with shock at that. “You wouldn’t” he starts, he wouldn’t hurt May. “Oh, but Pete, I would. And I will. Do you think she will fight me back if I threaten you?” Peter is feeling the desperation claw up his throat. “Please Grant, please don’t hurt her. I won’t say anything again” he slurs.

Is that just because he’s upset? His mouth is feeling like cotton and sandpaper at the same time.

“I know you won’t say anything Peter. She’s all you have left, isn’t she? Can you imagine if *another* family member got hurt because of you?” The words sting worse than a knife. His eyes are welling with tears. He shakes his head, but the movement rattles his brain. Nausea settling in his gut.

He can hear Grant still talking but it all of a sudden it sounds like it’s underwater. His thoughts are spiralling. Is he falling or is the couch getting bigger?

No, he's falling.

He hits the floor with a thud, someone's yelling and he's trying to conjure the words to tell them to shut up and let him think, but then he realises it's him.

A continuous keen, as he tries to roll away, but the world is spinning too fast. His brain whites out, and suddenly he can't remember where he is, who he was just talking to.

A hand is at the back of his shirt now. The hand feels big, like a monster's hand. Like the monsters in his nightmares. Ones with claws and alcoholic breath.

The hand flips him over and suddenly he's on his back, someone's sitting on his chest.

It takes him a moment to realise why he's suddenly facing away from the thing on top of him, before the horrible pain crashes through his scrambled head. The fist comes down again and hits the other side this time, and he's facing the opposite way all of a sudden.

This time he knows it's him when he hears the screaming.

The punches rain back and forth over both sides of his face. The taste of metal fills his mouth.

He finds the strength to put his arms up and block the hits but that only lasts a moment before the hands are grabbing onto his forearms and pinning them to the floor.

The figure is shouting in Peter's face again, and Peter blinks wildly trying to remember who it is, what is happening, why he feels like he's in some kind of twisted nightmare.

The blinking helps after a moment, and he realises that it's *Grant* on top of him. His struggles pick up immediately *I'm supposed to be fighting you* he thinks suddenly.

Peter summons up as much strength as he can manage, and rolls Grant off his chest. When he feels the weight leave his body, he starts to drag himself away, trying to get to his room. His room with a lock and a window to escape.

He doesn't know how far he makes it before a hand is gripping his ankle dragging him backwards.

Peter lets out a pathetic sob, kicking his legs and sinking his nails into the floorboards. His ears are ringing, and the floor is still changing shapes around him, but he *needs* to get away.

One of his flailing legs manages to make contact with flesh, and he feels a fleeting triumph before he resumes his scrambling to safety.

He accomplishes getting his knees under him this time, crawling much faster than dragging his body.

He makes it far enough to have a visual of his bedroom door this time when a foot makes contact with his side, causing him to let out a pained yelp as his falls to the floor.

But he is so close, he can't give up now.

Peter swings his fist wildly, each one making an impact on the tough body of Grant. He doesn't know where his fists are landing, but he still hits out until he hears the thump of a body hitting the floor.

His hand grips the wall for support as he brings himself to stand, but the change in altitude has him swaying dangerously. If he thought the room was spinning before, its nothing compared to how it is now.

He lets out a sob as he swings his head around, trying to regain focus. But he's weak from the fight, and his body is feeling the sickening rush of the drink and the hits to the head.

Peter's only just beginning to move again, hands splayed on the wall to stay upright, when his head is slammed with a brutal strength into the wall.

And then its lights out.

. . .

When he comes around this time, he's crumbled into a heap on the sofa. His head feels both clearer from the terrifying drinks effects, and simultaneously like he has been hit by a truck.

He groans as he tries to pull himself into a sitting position, piecing together what had just taken place.

He had talked to Grant, Grant had made him drink, Grant had beat him.

As his senses start to amplify and settle, his ears pick up talking in the other room. Mays voice is the first thing he hears, her panicked hushed whispering. Fear prickles under his skin, if May has seen him, which she couldn't have missed him, then she's talking to Grant.

And probably questioning why Peter was beaten and unconscious.

Which meant May was going to find out what Grant had been doing.

"I don't know May, I tried to calm him down, but he just kept hitting me. Kept telling me that he didn't want anyone replacing Ben. It was crazy, I thought the kid might actually kill me" Grants voice is so sincere Peter almost rethinks what had happened.

But then his confusion heightens. Why was Grant telling May that he had beaten Grant up? He had never mentioned Ben to Grant surely.

"I don't know what's going on with him. I know he's been stressed with school, and he said it was taking him time to adjust to having someone in the house, but I never imagined he would do something like this" May sounds like she's been crying, Peter feels himself frown, trying to piece together the parts of the conversation he had missed. They were obviously talking about him, but why?

"Didn't take the kid to be a drinker that's for sure. But you should have seen him honey, he had drunk at least 6 beers by the time I had gotten home, and half the bottle of vodka was empty, I don't know how much of that he had drunk just tonight, but that's hard liquor you know? He could have killed himself with the alcohol poisoning."

Peter's blood turns to ice. May wasn't finding out about the abuse. Grant had told May that he had gotten drunk and then beat Grant.

How could May believe that?

He pushed himself to stand, getting ready to storm into the kitchen and set the story straight.

*“if you don't keep your mouth shut Peter, it won't just be you that gets hurt”*

The memory of Grants threats hit him like a train.

Oh god.

If he defended himself then May would get hurt, but if he didn't, what would May think of him?

He stops listening to the conversation after that. The tears are rolling down his face in heavy waves. How has he let this happen?

When he looks up again, May and Grant are standing there watching him, Mays eyes have hardened, but he can see the worry on her face. Grant however is no longer concealing his smirk, now that May is only focusing on Peter.

Peter can see the dark bruising around Grants eye and arms from where he must have hit in his blind panic.

The part of him that still holds the good feels momentarily guilty for inflicting injuries on someone less strong than he is. But then he remembers how weak he feels every time Grant holds him down and the feelings gone.

It's May that breaks the silence first. “Have you got anything you would like to say Peter?” Her voice is stern, and he knows from experience what exactly she's asking for. But apologising to Grant feels harder than rescuing 10 people from a burning building. However, as he would for those 10 people, he knows he has to do this too.

“I’m sorry Grant, for hurting you” it comes out through his gritted teeth, and even May looks displeased with his tone.

“You have a lot of explaining to do young man. First you drink yourself half to death, then you hit and scream at Grant, who was only trying to help you, and then you run off into the night and come home looking like you’ve been in a cage fight?” Her voice is rising with every word, becoming more hysterical.

Peter glances at Grant with disbelief, but Grant only raises an eyebrow as a threat. Peter closes his eyes and takes a deep breath.

“I’m sorry May” he says, this time he is sincere. He hates making her upset.

“Sorry just doesn’t cut it Peter. You’re 15 years old! Why the hell are you getting into our alcohol? And where did you go when you went out to end up like this?”

“I’m sorry” he says again. “I don’t know what came over me. I just was bored and wanted to try, I didn’t mean for this to happen” he doesn’t answer her final question, but he’s sure he can tell her he went out to be Spiderman and fell if it comes up again.

“I just can’t forgive you for this Peter. You’re grounded until I figure out what to do with you. You can stay home and make it up to Grant for what you have done. I don’t think I need to tell you how disappointed I am with you.” Her voice is becoming tired. He knows he’s really disappointed her. He wants to scream it’s not true, but he can’t risk Grant laying a hand on her. So he just looks down and nods in defeat.

“You can go to your room Peter. I’ll bring you something for the headache you are probably going to have in the morning” She sighs and turns away.

Peter wants nothing more than to run and hug her and beg her to take the pain away, but instead he just gets up quietly with a final look at Grant who’s not even hiding how pleased he is.

Peter doesn’t have the energy to stare back. He walks to his room and gets straight into his bed, pulling the covers over his face and bringing his pillow to his mouth to muffle the screams that he finally lets out.

. . .

When the morning comes around, May is already gone, and Grant's waiting for him in the kitchen.

"Day one of punishment buddy. You can start by washing these dishes" Grant greets cheerfully.

Peter eyes him in suspicion. Grant's eye is still a dark blue, but he knows his own whole face is also a mess of colour bruising, which Grant eyes with a creepy appreciation. Slowly he makes his way over to the sink and sees that it's already been filled to the brim with water.

He likes this punishment so far. It's much better than waking up in his own blood again.

That thought goes out the window the moment he puts his hands in the soapy water.

Peter jerks his hands out with an aborted shout. The water was surely at boiling point, higher than the tap would be able to go. Quickly he whips his head to Grant, who's wearing a smirk now.

Grant shifts slightly over to reveal the kettle behind him and raises an eyebrow.

"Problem Pete?"

Peter grits his jaw and shakes his head. Looking back down at the water.

He braces himself for a moment, before plunging his hands back into the boiling water.

He can't help the hiss that comes out as he tries to acclimatise to the heat. But it's prickling and searing on his skin, almost too much to bear.

He quickly grabs the first dish and begins to scrub quickly, the faster he got this over with the better.

He distances his mind from the burning pain in his hands and forearms and completes the pile of dishes, finally removing them from the water to stare at Grant, a slight defiance in his eyes now, waiting for the next instruction. His hands are bright red and patchy in places where he had come in contact with the metal sitting in the sink.

“You missed one” Grant points out lazily. There’s a glass sitting next to where Grant is leaning. The glass Peter remembers he drunk from last night, the one filled with the horrible drink. He can tell Grant isn’t planning on passing it to him, so he walks over to pick it up himself.

As his hand reaches out Grant grabs his wrist, pulling him so he stumbles into Grants chest.

Quickly, he adjusts his footing so he’s not leaning on Grants shoulder, but he’s kept close enough to feel Grants breath on his neck. Grant uses his other hand to pick up the glass himself.

Peter eyes it warily. Grant suddenly tosses the glass into the sink from where he’s standing. The shattering of the glass can be heard as it impacts, and Peter turns to see the water splashing from where it hit.

He looks back at Grant confused. “Oops, my bad. Guess you’re going to have to get all that glass out” Grant chuckles humourlessly. Peter goes to pull his wrist out of his grip, but Grant pulls him closer “and I wouldn’t think about draining the water if I were you.”

Peter shivers at the close proximity, and the weight of the task. This wasn’t going to end well for him.

When Grant lets his wrist go he braces himself and goes to the sink once more. He closes his eyes and tries to channel his spider sense and the fine hairs on his hands to help him find each piece without cutting himself in the process.

He slowly sinks his hands into the water, it’s still so hot, and he realises he’s trembling.

His spider sense seems to do its job, helping him locate 3 large pieces of the glass without much more than the tiny cuts on his fingertips that he can feel stinging.



Suddenly there's a body pressing against his back and he jerks forward into the sink.

Peter's hands freeze in the water as Grant pushes him harder into the counter. Unsure of how this was going to progress, he keeps his body stiff waiting for what Grant was going to do next. He can feel his heartbeat thumping loudly in his chest, and he wonders for a moment if Grant could feel it.

Grant's hands find Peter's hips now and Peter is shivering despite the burning water.

"You make a good little housewife Peter. All you need is an apron, and you'd be the perfect woman." Peter flushes with embarrassment at the comment. His cheeks fill with heat and his heart somehow finds a way to beat even harder in his chest.

Grant laughs quietly before moving his arms slowly up Peter's sides, coming to land on his elbows, just above water level.

Peter doesn't realise he's crying until a tear splashes into the water in front of him. He tries to hold back the snuffle to avoid alerting Grant to his show of weakness. But he's so terrified. He hates how Grant has become like this, the soft touches, the close proximity, the derogatory words. It's too much. Peter wishes he would just hit him and get it over with.

He should be careful what he wishes for.

Grant's hands tighten on his elbows, pushing his arms deeper into the water. "Let's see if you missed any huh?"

Peter shakes his head, he knows there's a lot more pieces of glass to go as he's only found three so far.

But Grant is moving Peter's arms violently around the bottom of the sink, despite Peter's resistance. Suddenly a slicing pain shoots through Peter's hand and he lets out a gasp.

He can feel Grant pushing closer now, but Grant's hands don't stop moving his arms.

Another slice cuts his other hand, and then another. He's not sure if he should try hold onto those

pieces, but his hands are being manoeuvred too quickly. He starts to struggle in vain, mind blind with pain and fear.

The water is turning a brownish red from Peters blood, and Peter realises he actually letting out begs.

“Please Grant, no more, *please*”

But Grants breathing is picking up and he pushes impossibly closer.

Which is when Peter feels it.

Suddenly the excruciating pain in his hands is pushed to the back of his mind, all of his focus droned into the pressure pushing into his lower back.

Grant was aroused.

Peter freezes, trying to comprehend what he has just discovered.

Grant groans and presses his face into Peters neck. Peter feels hot disgust mixed with fear rolling through his gut.

Oh god *Grant was aroused*.

“You hurt so pretty Peter” he moans before sinking his teeth into Peters neck. Peter gasps and picks back up his struggling.

He realises his attempts at squirming aren’t doing him any good, and he uses just a bit of his strength to shove his elbows back and dislodge Grants hands from his arms, finally given enough space to scramble away.

The water on the floor from his struggle causes him to slip and land hard on the floor of the kitchen. He skitters backwards until he hits the corner and stares up panting.

He can feel the sick drip of blood running down his forearms where he clutches his shredded hands, and the throbbing pain from the bite mark where his neck meets his shoulder.

He can't even find the words of what to say to Grant. He feels a mix of embarrassment, fear, pain and devastation crashing through him.

Grant is just watching him, his stupid smirk still plastered on his face.

"Did you cut yourself Peter? You need to be more careful next time." He throws over his shoulder and adds "and don't forget to clean this mess up" as he saunters away.

Peter is still dumbstruck sitting in the corner. The blood is pooling in his hands and staining his pants. He can see where the flesh has opened and pumping out blood rapidly.

The sight makes him woozy.

He stumbles to stand up, trying to avoid the blood and soapy water on the floor. Finally, he gets himself out and almost falls into the bathroom, catching himself on the sink.

Splatters of blood stark against the porcelain basin. He turns the water on, cold this time and tries to both cool his burning skin and wash the blood off.

Usually cuts only last a couple of hours at the most, although he's not sure they have ever been this deep before.

Finding the first aid box under the sink, he quickly wraps his hands in the bandages, putting pressure on the cuts to hopefully stem the bleeding.

Only when he's stopped the bleeding (for now) does he actually let the weight of what just happened hit him.

Grant was *aroused*.

Nausea bubbles through him so quickly he almost doesn't reach the toilet in time before he's bringing up last night's dinner.

His vomiting stops, but his tears don't.

He sobs quietly on the floor until he has no more tears left.

Once his breathing has calmed down enough to think straight again he pulls his body off the floor, making his way back to the kitchen.

Thankfully he can't see Grant anywhere, and he quickly sets to work wiping the now dried blood and left-over water off the floor. When he goes to the sink he has to force himself to swallow the bile building up as he remembers how terrified he had been while standing right in this spot.

The water's cold now when Peter places one of his bandaged hands into the sink to dislodge the plug. The remaining shard of glass sits at the bottom of the basin, staring at him challengingly.

Peter picks up the dust pan and sweeps the rest of the pieces up, before disposing of all the evidence.

...

He checks his phone once his hands have healed just enough to be able to bend them and move his fingers without reopening the cuts.

*T.S: Hey Underoos, you still swinging by tomorrow to the lab? I know you're on break now so feel free to come whenever you like, you have all the access codes anyway if I'm not there.*

He feels the sadness bubbling to his throat yet again. If he could have just stayed with Tony over the whole summer break, maybe none of this would have happened.

But then it would just be Grant and May in the house, and Grant wouldn't have anyone else but May to let his frustration out on.

He types back a reply slowly, trying to manoeuvre around his knitting together hands

*P.P: Sorry Tony, I'm actually grounded at the moment. Don't think I'll be able to come out to the tower for a little while.*

He sends the text woefully, wishing he could be around his designs and experiments right this second.

*T.S: Damn kid, what did you do to cop that? Shame, I had some really great stuff lined up to work on with you. Maybe next week?*

Peter felt the disappointment quickly filling his chest.

*P.P: What kind of great stuff?? I just got into a fight with Grant and May. Hopefully it will blow over next week.*

He knew it wouldn't.

*T.S: That's rough. Are you stuck doing the dishes for the rest of your holidays now? And you will just have to wait and see when your prison sentence is over young buck.*

Images flash through Peters mind. Grant pushing him down against the sink, Grants arousal, Grants arousal, Grants arousal, Grants teeth on his neck. He shudders and chokes back the tears.

*P.P: Something like that. Talk to you soon.* He signs off. How was he going to survive this for the rest of his break?

A knock on the door pulls him from his thoughts, quickly he shoves the phone under his mattress just in case Grant decided to take that from him too.

His heart begins to race, Grant was coming into his room, Oh God. What was he going to do?

Peter breathes out a sigh of barely contained relief. It's May that walks through his door, shutting it gently behind her.

Peter sits up, pulling his sleeves over his hands in the hopes of hiding the bandages.

"How are you feeling today?" She asks, leaning up against the bunk frame. She still has a level of hardness behind her eyes, but it has diminished slightly.

"I'm fine, how was your day?" He replies quietly, not quite meeting her eyes. How would she feel if she had known that Peter had let her boyfriend get aroused by him?

"Peter, you need to cut the bullshit. I haven't forced you to explain why you barely talk anymore and spend all your time at home in your room. I get it. You're a teenager. I haven't ever stopped you from doing what you want, like spending more time with Tony than me, or continuing to put your life in danger every night.

She continues after a pause "But I cannot fathom how you think it's ever okay to get drunk under my roof when you are still a child. And treating Grant the way you did? You're so lucky he didn't walk out on us last night."

He starts to shake with anger, he wishes Grant *did* walk out last night. But he knows he can't correct her. Maybe he deserves this.

"And I know you obviously went out as Spiderman while you were intoxicated" She gestures to his still swollen face. "Which I can't even begin to explain how stupid and reckless that was."

*Please don't take the suit* he thinks. *It's all I have left.*

"I will be talking to Tony about that, that's for sure. I sure as hell hope you're not getting these ideas from hanging around him so much."

Peter's head snaps up, "He's not like that at all May, you know that" how could she even insinuate

Tony was a bad influence on him, after all he had done for Peter.

“Yeah well you’re not like that either Peter and yet here we are. Do you want another try at explaining yourself?”

Here’s his opportunity again. But he flushes with shame. He could *never* tell May what Grant had done. He was too humiliated.

He looks down again. “It was stupid and I’m sorry. I just wanted to see if I could get drunk, with my powers. And I took it too far. I didn’t go out as Spiderman, I didn’t even wear the suit. I just climbed up a wall to get some air but lost my footing I guess.”

It’s a lame excuse but he knows she will take anything at this moment.

“And what about what you said and did to Grant?” she prompts.

He has to breathe for a moment before formulating another story. When did he get so good at lying to her?

“I don’t know what came over me. I just felt miserable about Ben again, and then I don’t know what happened.” He says quietly. He hates that he’s using Ben as an excuse for something he didn’t do.

May nods her head and thinks for a second. “Alcohol can bring out the worst in you. Peter, I’m still not going to excuse this behaviour, and Grant and I have discussed what we think is the best way forward to help you understand the magnitude of the situation”

Peter feels a shiver run down his spine. What had Grant planned?

“You are grounded for two weeks, we will make a list of chores we expect you to do each day. I don’t want you leaving this house at all. Not for the lab, not for your friends, and certainly not for Spiderman.”

He sucks a breath in at that. *Please don’t take the suit* he thinks again.

“I’m going to make sure Tony is aware of the rules, and I’ll make sure he keeps an eye on you so that you don’t try sneak out anyway.”

Peter nods his head shamefully. He wishes Tony didn’t have to be told this horrible lie too. What would Tony think of him? “Can you not tell him what I did? I don’t want him to be mad at me too” he begs quietly.

She clicks her tongue once before answering “I’ll think about it. Peter I’m not trying to ruin your life, okay? I just can’t let you hurt yourself like that. You’re all I have left kiddo. Knowing that last night you could have died... I don’t think you understand what that did to me. You were just lying there on the couch, passed out and black and blue, I just, I can’t lose you too.”

She raises a shaky hand to her mouth and a tear slips down her cheek as she looks away.

Peter wants so badly to comfort her, but he’s terrified of breaking down too. She would never forgive herself if he told her about the kind of man she had brought into the house. He had to protect her from that until Grant went away on his own.

“I am sorry May, I promise I’ll be better” he says instead, still gripping onto the edges of his sweatshirt sleeves. She nods and wipes her tears away.

She stands up straighter, “Grant said he has seen this kind of teenage behaviour before from his family friends. He really wants to help you Peter. He says he’s going to spend more time with you, maybe a bit more attention and time with someone like him will help you to learn things that I don’t know how to teach you.” She says quietly. “You know I will always love you Peter, but please just talk to me next time you want to try something like that. Or Grant, or Tony I don’t care. Just don’t do it on your own.”

He nods mutely. He doesn’t want to spend more time with Grant and he certainly doesn’t want Grant to *teach* him anything.

She sighs again. Leaning over to ruffle his hair. “Have you eaten?” she asks. He hasn’t, but he doesn’t think anything he could eat would stay down now, so he nods. “Okay, well if you want to stay in here that’s fine. I won’t see you tomorrow then.” He nods again, but keeps his eyes trained on the floor.



She waits a moment, before he watches her feet walk away, the door closing behind her.

He throws himself back on his bed, staring up at the ceiling.

This was going to be the longest two weeks of his life.

## Chapter End Notes

:(

I have planned out what each chapter is going to look like, so I have a clear direction of what will happen, meaning the chapters will be pumped out relatively quickly!

It also means that theres going to be no comfort for a while so sozza and its going to get a hell of a lot worse before it gets better.

## Chapter 4

### Chapter Notes

Thank you for all the comments and kuddos's on the last chapter!! Did not expect that kind of response at all!

Once again, there will be no comfort for Peter for a little while still, so you're just going to have sad abused lil puppy Peter for a few more chapters.

Mind the tags please, more graphic abuse and non-con

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

On the following day Peter finds the list sitting on the benchtop of the kitchen, and he has to repress a shiver as he spares a glance at the kitchen sink.

*Grant was aroused, Grant was aroused, Grant was aroused*

Peter makes his way over to the fridge, stomach growling from not having had dinner yesterday. Come to think of it, Peter realises he hasn't actually eaten since Sunday night. He was too preoccupied with *other* things.

As he glances inside the fridge, not paying attention to his surroundings, the door suddenly slams, trapping Peters fingers inside.

He lets out a sharp gasp, wrenching his hand away. One of the larger cuts from yesterday that was still to completely heal over reopens and starts to weep blood.

Peter follows the hand that is still resting on the door and sees that it leads to Grant, who stands impassively, wearing his signature lopsided smirk.

Peters stomach drops, no longer feeling the hunger he was moments before. He backs away until he comes in contact with the fridge, but it's not as far away as he needs. Grant moves too, bracing his hand near Peters head, the other reaches out and snatches Peters wrist, examining the sluggish bleeding wound.

"Did a number on yourself didn't you?" He smiles, but Peter can see the darkening of his eyes, and feels his stomach lurch even further at their compromising position. One day ago, he would have thought Grant was towering over him to establish his dominance, but now Peter can't stop running through the ways Grant might touch him again.

Peter jerks his wrist out of Grants grip, attempting to move himself away from Grants gaze. He feels like prey in Grants cage, a feral fear pushes through his lungs and he pitches forward, causing Grant to stumble back.

He expects the slap before it even comes down on his cheek. He prefers this. Distance and a physical punishment, this was better than that feeling of being trapped and touched.

Grant stares at him with no attempt to conceal the anger flowing from his face.

"You can eat when you have finished all of your chores, you little prick" he seethes. Peter scrambles away, grabbing the list and holding it tightly in his fist. He waits for Grant to walk away, but his fiery eyes stay trained on Peter.

Peter glances down, scanning through the items. He nods his head before moving slowly around Grant to the cupboard of cleaning supplies. He grasps the broom, *sweep the floors*, easy task, quick to finish.

Before he can make it any further around the kitchen Grant is snatching the broom out of his hands. He holds eye contact with Peter before bringing his knee up and the broom down, snapping it just above where the handle meets the brush.

Peter stares at him in confusion, and a little bit of anxiety rushes through him. *Was Grant going to beat him with the handle?* Instead he tosses Peter the brush, which Peter catches before it can hit him in the chest.

"You can use just this. I expect the whole house to be done in an hour, or else." He threatens.

"You know you could have just given me the dust pan" Peter mumbles as he turns around to begin his given task. He barely makes it a step before there's a hand at the back of his shirt, hauling him around until his head smacks into the pantry door. The hand jerks him back and down just as quickly, and he hits the floor hard, rolling with the impact.

"Don't you *ever* speak to me like that" Grant hisses. His foot slams into Peter's ribs and Peter lets out a groan as he feels them give a creak. With the amount of breaks to them in the past 2 years, he's surprised they haven't turned to dust yet.

Grant's walking away now, giving Peter a moment to collect himself.

He rolls over onto his front, getting himself up to his hands and knees. He shakes his head to try and brace himself from the pain already thumping in his chest. He reclaims the brush, and begins to slowly sweep the floors, crawling around humiliated, until the room is complete, before trudging his way to the next part of the house.

Peter realises as he finishes up with the dining room why Grant had broken the broom. It was going to be impossible to clean the whole house like this in an hour. A quick glance to the clock lets him know he had already spent 30 minutes on only 2 rooms. And there were still 4 areas to go.

He knows Grant just wanted to have an excuse to enforce a punishment, but now Peter's not so sure what that kind of punishment was going to be. Would it be some more kicks to the ribs, or was he going to be helplessly pressed against the counter again?

He feels the tears building behind his eyes, and he quickly shuts them to fight down the panic rising. He frantically tries to clean the next room, his knees and wrists aching from the strain.

Boots suddenly appear in front of his vision and he looks up to see Grant's smug face. "While I do love it when you're on your knees Peter, your hour is up. Are you finished?"

Peter flushes with the mention of him on his knees, and he scrambles to stand up, joints cracking painfully and his muscles protesting with the sudden change. "Please, I can finish if you just give me one more hour or let me use a proper broom" he begs. He had spent the last thirty minutes conjuring up the worst punishments Grant could inflict, his mind creating scenario after scenario until he was dizzy with distress.

Grant simply smiled patronisingly. Peter knows this was a set up, but he still feels his own failure

sitting heavy in his gut.

"Don't worry Peter. You can come back to sweeping in a little while. How about you try one of your other chores instead?" His voice is sickly sweet, Peter feels his heart rate rise, this was another set up.

"How about, say, you work on number 6 on your list?" He says, still in that horribly cunning tone. Peter pulls the crumbled list from his pocket, looking for number 6. *Scrub the bathroom tiles*, it reads, the writing distinctively different than the other things on the list. Grant had penciled this one in himself.

"Seems pretty easy doesn't it? I'm sure you can't fail at finishing that job" his voice dripping with pleasure and sarcasm. Peter flushes again and looks down. He nods and starts to make his way into the bathroom.

He knows Grant well enough to know there was going to be a catch to how he would be made clean, so he stands in the middle of the bathroom and awaits instruction with his head hanging low.

Grant smiles, seemingly pleased with Peter's submission, and goes to the bathroom cupboard. He takes out 2 large bottles of bleach, what May sometimes uses in her spring cleans. Peter winces, since the bite even a small whiff of bleach gave him a migraine for the rest of the day.

Grant opens the first bottle, and watches Peter as he tips the entire contents of the bottle onto the tiles. Peter stares at Grant in shock as the chemical pools around his bare feet, the smell already so intense he starts to feel light headed.

Grant is still smiling as he opens the second bottle, this time he splashes the liquid on the walls and the basin, shaking the bottle until there's nothing left.

"You can come out when this is completely clean" he adds, in case Peter hadn't already worked out what his intentions were. Peter looks at him with disbelief. "Grant, I can't, it could kill me! There's too much!" his hysteria rising.

"Not if you don't drink it buddy. Better work faster this time" he sneers as he turns on his heel and steps out of the room, slamming the door behind him.

Peter spins around in desperation, the smell so toxic he could feel each breath burning as it made its way down his oesophagus. He couldn't help the terrified sob that tore its way from his throat.

Quickly he pulled his shirt off and scrunched it into a ball covering his nose and mouth. It worked just enough to feel his lungs settling again, and he searched desperately for the cleaning tools in the cupboard.

He slipped on a larger puddle of the bleach and cried out as it came in contact with his open cuts.

Quickly pulling himself up and running to the sink, he tried to wash the chemicals from his wounds. His eyes were starting to water, he wasn't even sure if he was crying or if it was from the toxic air.

As soon as he found the sponges and cloths, he set to work, frantically wiping down the bench, floor, toilet and shower. He tried to push all the liquid into the drain and down the sink, but the smell and the horrible acidic air was still so potent.

He could feel himself getting progressively more lightheaded, his skin and eyes burning from the contact and his shirt barely providing enough protection to his burning lungs and throat.

He banged on the door, shaking the door handle and letting out another sob when he found it locked. Grant had switched the handles around before Peter had even realised. "Im done Grant! Please let me out" he screamed, hands slamming against the wood.

No response came, and Peter sunk to the floor, sobbing violently. He felt as if he had drunk the entire bottle of bleach by this point. His entire body sizzling and burning.

He stared at the window high up in the corner of the room, it wasn't enough to fit his body through, but maybe enough to get a breath of fresh air.

He slipped and crawled over to the wall, bracing his hands on the tile and starting to climb up. But the wall was too slick and damp from the cleaning products, and he fell uselessly to the floor.

He let out a scream of frustration before trying again, finding the same results. His stomach lurched and he couldn't stop the acidic bile that he spewed out on the floor next to him, adding to the burns on his throat and tongue.

Peter knows this punishment has nothing to do with the fact he hadn't finished cleaning, and everything to do with pushing Grant away from touching him, twice now. A sinking trapped feeling settles over him, realising these were the kind of deathly punishments he was to face if he didn't let Grant get away with his sick perverted games.

He curled into a ball in the corner of the room, clutching his sodden shirt to his face, sobbing loudly until he felt himself near the darkness that had been reaching for him, and he let it wash over him, grateful for a relief from this hell.

...

He half came to when he felt the first breeze of fresh air. His eyes could make out no more than a blurry mosaic of a person moving towards him. Strong hands pulled him up and dragged him away from his spot on the wall.

Peter tried blearily to keep his eyes open as the hands let go of him, startling loudly when a sudden spray of freezing cold hit him, succeeding in waking him up.

He flinched and tried to move away but the hands came down on his chest again and the icy water was poured over his whole body. He found relief in the cold water finally settling the chemical burns on his skin and helping to clean his eyes.

A hand gripped his chin, wrenching it open painfully. The water was directed into his mouth and Peter choked and gargled and it was forcibly poured down his burnt throat. The relief was only temporary this time before he felt himself unable to breathe as the water continued to spray in his face and nose.

He jerked and struggled until finally the water disappeared, and he was left shivering and spluttering on the shower floor.

The hands were on him again, this time pulling him up, none too gently, and pushed him blindly out of the bathroom, shutting the wretched door behind them.

Peter was thrown onto the floor of the hallway, feeling a puddle start to form around him. As he started to take large lungfuls of clean air, his head began to clear, his eyes following suit.

Grant was straddling him now, pushing down and depriving Peter from the precious air he desperately needed. His body was blotched with small patches of chemical burns, skin peeling

sickeningly. Peter shivered violently, shock amplifying now that he was aware of his surroundings.

Grant holds Peters arms above his head with one hand, the other drags slowly over Peters bare chest, stopping to dig his nails into the open burns. Peter cries out, jack-knifing in an attempt to lessen the searing pain.

He leans closer to Peters face, close enough for his hot breath to fan over Peters wet cheek. "You think you will try harder to finish your jobs next time, Peter?" he questions, leaving no room for the wrong answer.

Peter nodded hastily, silently begging for this to be the end of his punishment.

"*Good boy*" he smiles, his hand dropping dangerously low on Peters hip to deliver a final squeeze that makes Peters stomach roll. "I think we're done for today" Grant concludes, pulling himself off, almost regretfully, and disappears down the hall, leaving Peter to curl protectively around himself and ride out the waves of thick nausea.

...

After Peter got back to his room, wrapping himself in warm dry clothes and successfully avoiding a debilitating panic attack, he retreats back out into the lounge room, picking up the discarded list off the floor.

Grant is nowhere to be seen now, Peter assumes he has gone out for the rest of the afternoon. So Peter begins to finish the remaining items on the list of chores, stopping for breaks every few minutes to catch his breath. The chemical burns in his lungs causing him to barely manage a full breath of air.

He doesn't realise how long he's been cleaning for until the door opens, and May and Grant are walking in. May beams when she sees Peter wiping down the coffee table.

"Oh Peter! The house looks amazing! You did a great job sweetie!" she coos. Peter feels a sudden horrible resentment towards her, so he offers a dry smile, ignoring the way her eyebrows knit just a fraction.

He's actually not sure how wrecked his voice was going to be if he tried to speak, so he's somewhat grateful when Grant is the one to step in and speak up. "She's right Pete! You have done a great job here. Deserves a special treat I think!" He claps.

May smiles at him, Peter can see the adoration in her eyes and he has to look away to stop the bile coming up again.

"Maybe we can all sit and watch a movie and order some pizza! How about you choose what we watch Peter" She adds in. He just nods and gives her a weak smile. He would rather just crawl into bed and avoid them both if he's honest.

"That sounds like a great idea" he says when he sees she is waiting for a reply. His voice croaks with each word and she looks at him worriedly. Grant jumps in again before Peter can even think of an excuse for it.

"Your voice still sounds terrible Pete. You should have seen the poor kid May, he was working so hard to make the house perfect earlier this afternoon and inhaled a bit of bleach, couldn't stop coughing for almost an hour, hey Peter?" Grant slaps his hand on Peters shoulder as he addresses him, Peter fighting with all his strength to stop the flinch.

May's concern grows "Oh honey! I know how much the smell of bleach affects you! You shouldn't have used that to clean, I have other sprays for you to use!" she chides, coming over to wrap Peter in her arms.

He knows he should be mad at her for being too caught up in her relationship and work to see what was going on, but he knows how good he is at lying and covering his tracks. He had hid Spiderman for so long before all of this and she barely suspected a thing.

It's his fault really. He could always just tell her. She would believe him after all, without even questioning it, he doesn't doubt that for a second, but he knows what that would do to her. She wouldn't be able to come back from that. He owes her some happiness. Grant would get bored of them after a while. He hoped.

When the pizza comes, and Peter chooses an old movie that him and Tony had watched once together, he goes to sit on the second couch away from May and Grant but May reaches her hand out and pulls him to sit next to her.

She holds his hand as the movie begins, and he feels pathetic for such a small gesture making him want to cry. It was just so nice to not be in pain when someone else's hands were on him for once.

That feeling was short lived.

Less than an hour into the movie, he feels Grants arm swing over on the back of the couch, May snuggling further into Grants chest, watching the movie intently.

Grants cold hand touches the back of Peters neck, and Peter has to repress the jerk and shudder that wants to run its course through his body. The hand sits there, squeezing lightly. Peter can't see the TV anymore, his barely touched slices of pizza no longer appealing to him.

His heart races at the contact, and he feels the sickening pull of his stomach.

The hand stays there for the rest of the movie, alternating between squeezing and thumbing circles, and Peter lets out a quiet whimper of relief when its finally over, feigning a yawn and wishing them both a quick goodnight before clambering to the safety of his bedroom. Tiredness gone, he lays awake and stares at the top of his bunk for the rest of the night.

...

Grants cold hands become familiar to Peter very quickly after that.

His spider-sense on a such a constant high that each time that hand comes in contact with his skin, he feels himself flinch, jerking back in shock and trying to reject they reflex to move away, fearing the punishment of angering Grant.

For the better part of two days, the touches are relatively minor, but still enough to provoke a deep trembling fear in Peters bones. First it was just a stroke of hand on his lower back any time his shirt had ridden up while he was reaching up high. Then the hand at the base of his neck any time Grant was sitting close enough to reach him.

When he first pressed Peter into the counter again, Peters panic overwhelmed him, a tremor working its way up from his legs. Grant had chuckled knowingly, his hands lowering to Peters hips, rubbing up and down. He had leaned closer just enough for Peter to feel the pressure in his pants again. He hadn't said a word, seemingly just happy to watch Peter shake with the strain to not run.

After that he did it again, and again, *and again*. Just for the fun of it.

Each time Peter would freeze, body flushing with shame, fear, disgust.

Grants daily chores simmer down to simple tasks; tidying the house, cooking the meals, washing the dishes, *which Peter does now in record speed*.

He interchanges between touching Peters skin gently, and deliberately pushing him into walls, tables and chairs, sticking his foot out when Peter passes just to watch him fall.

And its driving Peter crazy.

He feels like he's getting head spins from Grant caressing his back one moment, and then delivering a kick to the back of his knees the next, laughing when Peter collides painfully with the floor.

The contrast is almost too much to comprehend. He's constantly on edge, unsure whether to slacken for a hit, or tense for a touch. His hands trembled with every task, and he found the pressure at the back of his throat nagging at him, testing his ability to hold back the tears as each hour passed.

...

On Saturday Peter makes sure he converses with May, describing in vivid detail science projects he had been 'watching' this week. It's all a front, he'd barely touched his phone or computer at all since school had ended, but he needs to work on his façade so she doesn't get suspicious.

She buys it and smiles fondly as he talks, she puts her warm hands on his chin and kisses his forehead sighing happily "There's my Peter I know" she says softly. He feels both warm hearted from her loving touches, and cold from the lies he keeps feeding her, only making it worse for himself, pushing her further into the darkness.

"I'm going out tonight if that's okay? Some of the girls from work want to grab dinner and a movie tonight, you and Grant can get takeaway for dinner if you like?" she adds casually.

His mood instantly pummels. He had convinced himself he was going to have two days of safety while she was home to protect him, but his veil of naivety is quickly swept from beneath him.

He forces a smile back on his face, he had worked so hard for her to think he was happy.

"That's great May, I'm sure you will have a really nice night." She kisses him on the head again and he lets himself lean into it just for a moment, relishing in her warmth. "You're too good for me kiddo" she smiles.

When she leaves the house for the night, he hides out in his room, hoping Grant wont risk anything tonight if May was coming home at a reasonable hour.

It's short lived however, as Grant shouts his name less than 20 minutes after she walks out of the apartment.

Grant's already got a stack of empty bottles littering the table by the time Peter makes his way into the lounge room, shocked that Grant could drink so much in a short time. Peters stomach suddenly lurches, he prays that this wasn't going to end like last time, with a drink shoved into his mouth and



a blurry end to his night.

"Go grab yourself something to drink and come sit down, we can watch a movie" Grant says, it almost feels like something a real father figure would say. Peter frowns and accepts another weird night to add to his list, retrieving a can of soda from the fridge.

He opens it carefully, sitting gingerly on the edge of the couch, sipping quietly and waiting for Grant to proceed with the night's events.

Grant chooses a movie, something mediocre at best that Peter had already seen. Peter sunk further into the couch, thinking to himself how strange Grant was being... almost normal.

"Can you go grab me another beer?" Grant asks suddenly, breaking Peter out of his thoughts. Peter gracefully stands up, placing his half-drunk can back on the table and going to the kitchen to pick out a bottle from the fridge. He returns to the lounge room and passes it to Grant, sitting back in the same spot as before, picking up his drink and taking a sip.

There's a tangy taste to it now, he thinks mildly that he had left it too long and it was already starting to de-fizz.

Grant's not watching the movie anymore, Peter realises. Instead he's eyes Peter, while drinking his beer.

The smell is already starting to make Peter feel light headed. He blinks his eyes and focuses on the movie, trying to pointedly avoid thinking about Grant's piercing gaze.

His eyes become more blurred, and he realises maybe he's more tired than he thought, so he leans forward and takes another gulp of his soda to try and wake himself up.

It doesn't help much, only causes his stomach to drop uncomfortably and the fog in his head to grow. The smell of the beer combined with his lack of eating and sleeping probably.

He starts to feel a cold sweat rising in his chest, and he shrugs off his hoodie and finishes the last of his drink to hopefully cool himself down. But it only makes him hotter.

Maybe he was getting sick?

The TV is starting to blur and take different shapes, the floor starting to spin just a fraction.

He sits back and hopes the movie will finish soon so he can crawl into bed and hopefully sleep off this awful feeling.

He realises Grant is speaking to him now, but it sounds warped and muffled, he catches maybe a few words, but doesn't make sense of them, only nods. He thinks he heard 'change', 'movie', and 'something different', but he can't be sure.

He can still see Grant's too-many-teeth smile as he gets up and fiddles with the TV. Peter stares at the ceiling, trying to catch his breath and focus, which helps a small amount to clear his head, but his limbs now heavy with lethargy.

Grant's back on the couch again, closer this time. Peter's too unwell to remember to repress the shudder when the hand clamps down on the back of his neck, but Grant only chuckles and slides even closer to Peter's side.

"You're gonna like this" Grant points out, but it sounds distant despite being so close to Peter's ear.

The screen changes, and Peter can make out a group of people on the screen. It doesn't have opening credits like a normal movie, and Peter feels something unsettling wash over him.

The more his eyes focus on the screen the more clear they become and it hits him so suddenly what kind of film this is, that his head rushes with the flush of embarrassment and the need to escape.

The girl is naked now, the men are too. She looks young, and they are distinctively older, circling her as if she were prey. Peters face burns with mortification.

"I don't want to watch this" Peter says wetly. "*Please don't make me watch this*" he begs, hopeful that Grant will take pity.

When has he ever.

Peters not sure if he's just blacking out for small increments, because the next time his eyes focus on the screen the men have begun to penetrate the woman, spilling filthy expletives at her, tossing around words like whore, slut, dirty. Peter feels sick.

"Look how she takes it Peter, look how she's begging for it" Grant whispers in awe, he's even closer to Peter now, the hand still resting on Peter neck but their thighs are pressing uncomfortably close.

Peter shakes his head, but he feels so weak. He begins to cry, hating himself for every tear wasted. "*Please*" he begs again "Please turn it off". Grant's not listening though, he's pressing even more closer, the hand not holding Peters neck with a bruising grip reaches out and takes hold of Peters left wrist, lacing his fingers with the back of Peters hand.

Peter shakes his head again, the hand behind his head stops him from turning his neck. He can't see what Grant is going to do with his hand, but he can see the men slapping the woman now, degrading her, humiliating her. He doesn't want to watch this.

He feels his palm being brushed over fabric, before its being forced to pushed down. Peter's eyes dart to his left to see his hand being pressed into Grants groin. He manages a weak jolt at that, but it sends the room into a spiralling dance of fuzz and cotton.

His panic is overridden with dejavu.

This is exactly how he felt after he had been 'drunk'. But he hadn't had any alcohol tonight, so why was he feeling the same effects?

He doesn't have another spare minute to ponder the thought before his mind draws his fading attention back to the present, the rough scrape of Grants trousers on his palm.

Peter can feel the bulge now that he's paying attention, and he feels a flooring sickness settle in his body that he has to squeeze his eyes shut.

When he opens them again, the nightmare is still happening. His hand his still being used like a puppet, touching Grant horribly.

Sobs are tearing their way out of his mouth now, mixing in with Grants heavy panting and the loud obscene moans from the television.

Grant presses down on Peters hand harder, letting out a loud groan. The hand holding Peters neck moves to the hair at his nape and yanks down viciously as Grant grinds his hips and breathes out a

shudder before releasing Peter completely to slump down on the cushions sated.

Peter realises a moment later that Grant had finished and had freed him. He barely folds over before he can stop himself, vomiting violently into his lap, shaking with bone deep terror and humiliation.

"See, I told you that you would like the movie" Grant mocks, and Peter can't help himself from putting his head down and vomiting again.

...

Its 2.00am when his mind finally goes back to being as clear as it's supposed to be. It's not long after that he concludes Grant had spiked his soda, and most likely that drink from last week.

His pillow already holds all of his tears and his screams that he had pressed into it as he metabolised whatever he was given. Now he just feels numb.

It's almost an unconscious thought when he reaches over to his phone and hits call, the phone only ringing twice before being answered.

"Pete? Are you okay?" Tony's concerned voice feels like a bucket of honey as soon as it hits Peters ears. He lets himself bathe in it for a moment before speaking.

"Hey Tony, I'm fine" *I'm the furthest from fine I've ever been* "did I wake you?" he asks softly, not wanting to alert the rest of the house to his phone call, but also not wanting to have bothered Tony too much.

"No, actually, you didn't, I'm still in the lab working on those specs we discussed the other week, what's going on kiddo, why are you still up?" Tony's voice is softer now too, knowing there's no imminent danger.

"Couldn't sleep, wanted to hear your voice, thought it might help" he admits quietly. Too tired to even feel ashamed.

Tony pauses for a moment, Peter wonders if he's overstepped, but he realises the pause is just Tony taking him off loud speaker and sitting down to give Peter his full attention. Peters can feel the soul deep chill start to ebb away.

"Yeah? Are you implying I bore you to sleep kid?" He jokes, but his tone is still soft and careful "I miss you too buddy" he adds.

A tear slips down the side of Peters eye, catching in his hair. God, he missed Tony.

"Did you have a nightmare?" Tony questions. It would be plausible, given the amount of times he had called Tony in the middle of panic attack in the dead of the night.

"You could say that" Peter responds. He's too exhausted to lie tonight. "Can you just, tell me about your day?" he asks meekly.

Tony doesn't miss a beat. Telling story after story, some that Peters already heard before, but it calms his beating heart and fills his chest until his shivering has subsided and his eyes are dry. Sleep finally not feeling so far away.

Tony's voice gets gentler, "You know I'm always here for you kid, no matter how big or small the problem. You just need to call me, and I'll be there" there's an underlying subtext that even in his

drowsy state Peter can still understand *I know there's something wrong, I just don't know how to ask*. He appreciates that Tony doesn't ask though, Tony could never know what he had done. He couldn't risk losing the best thing left in his life.

"I know, thank you Tony, really" he whispers, grateful his voice doesn't break. "Get some sleep kiddo" Tony says at last, and Peter hangs up before he can beg for help.

...

## Chapter End Notes

:( :(

Hoping to pump out the next few chapters in the next week or so!! Be prepared for dark sad times ahead.

## Chapter 5

### Chapter Notes

Hi all! I love reading all your comments! Thank you so much for sticking with this story! Heres an accidental 8.2k words lol.

I hit a little block and couldnt find the inspo to write this chapter for about 2 or 3 days, so I decided to make up a little vision board of abused PP with scenes from this fic (some that have already happened and some that will take place soon) so enjoy that too!

This chapter has quite a lot of violence and more intense sexual assault. Please be warned and proceed with caution.

Once again, you've got a lot more sadness to come.

Enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)



-

Peter pretends to sleep most of the day. He sits pressed up against his locked door, and lets his senses dial in to every small sound, step, vibration and conversation, gripping onto his doorknob to aid the lock any time he hears someone approaching his room.

He can feel the fatigue in his muscles from having sat so tense for the past however many hours

since he had woken up, choking on a scream from a nightmare (memory?) of the night's events.

Each time he closed his eyes, Grant's sneering face and sweaty brow leered over him, Peter's hands being forced against his will to touch. He could still hear the moans and pants in his ears as he brought Grant to release, the hand on his hair signalling the finish.

Peter would always jerk up every time his memory decided to play the night again, getting less and less hazy each time it replayed.

He wasn't sure if everything he remembered was entirely true, or if his mind had filled in the blanks from when he lost focus and the drug coursing through his system had taken away his ability to form a coherent thought.

But he does know the horrible oozing terror that pulsed through his veins every time he has a fleeting thought about Grant isn't for nothing.

Peter wasn't stupid. He had seen the PSA's about sexual abuse. He had been in the health classes about when there was a *big bad wolf* making you do things you didn't want to do. He also knew that if this was the path Grant was escalating to, it was going to get a whole lot worse.

But those PSA's and classes never taught him what to do when someone else was going to get hurt if he spoke up. Never showed him how to make sure they both would be safe, before the pain and fear would be over.

*Talk to an adult* it always said. But Peter only had 3 adults in his life. Grant *was* the adult hurting him, May was the adult going to get hurt, which only left Tony.

The thought of having to tell Tony though, the thought of having to say the words of what had happened, it only brought a burning shame to his cheeks. How *could* he tell Tony? How could he live knowing Tony would only treat him as a traumatised child for the rest of his life?

Although, traumatised was the exact word for how he was feeling right now.

Could he tell Tony? Tony could make it all stop, couldn't he?

But what if Tony wasn't enough? What if Grant knew, and hurt May while he was out? What if they didn't have enough proof? Peter healed every time Grant hurt him, never had any lasting injuries... how would they prove Grant had been hurting him? And then he would have to go back to living with Grant, with him knowing that Peter had tried to dob him in. May would be dead for sure. And Peter would be stuck in this hell forever.

He didn't realise he was having a panic attack until his phone cluttered to the floor, his shaking hands barely able to make a fist.

*One breath in, one breath out.* He was okay, no one was coming in, Grant wasn't here, *he was okay.*

No. He couldn't tell anyone. He just had to hold on to the hope that Grant would move on, or someone would catch them in the act and be a witness to what was happening. You don't need evidence if you have a witness, right?

His stomach grumbles painfully, and he has to actually think hard about the last time he ate a full meal, other than the few bites of pizza on Saturday night. He counts back the days and finds himself at a full week. His stomach gives another growl, and his head aches in affirmation that it had been in fact 7 days since he had had a full meal.

With his metabolism, it was no wonder why he had felt himself begin to weaken. And maybe why the drug had taken so long to wear off this time. He lifts up his shirt and sees the rashes, burns and blistering still raised on his stomach from the bleach incident. His ribs are still a colourful array of blues, yellows and purples from the variety of kicks he had absorbed this week, and at further inspection he notes that his hands are still scarred from the cuts in the sink.

Meaning his healing factor was *not* doing its job.

Peter felt a panic rise again. How had he not noticed that he hadn't been healing properly?

He quickly jumped up off the floor and felt his head spin in dizziness at the abrupt change. Now he was thinking about it, he felt all his injuries and hunger hit him all at once. As if his body was hiding it all until he noticed.

But how could he get food? Grant would be out there, and he couldn't risk bumping into him. Although May would most likely be with him so maybe they wouldn't bother him.



He had to practically pry the door open, as his tensed and terrified grip on the handle had ended up forcing maybe a bit too much strength, and the handle was bent and twisted.

He balanced his weight carefully as he moved around the halls, knowing the exact spots to step to make no noise. He moved slowly, smiling in triumph as he reached the kitchen.

He could see May and Grant sitting at the couch with the TV on. His heart sped up by just a look at the back of Grants head.

Quickly he found a container of left overs and picked up a piece of fruit to accompany it.

As he turned and shut the door he almost dropped all the food in his hands.

Grant was leaning against the counter lazily, *smirking*.

Peter felt his stomach fall through to the floor, an electric fear shooting up his spine. He could almost feel Grants breath on his neck, his hand touching the -

“Whatcha up to, Pete?” he drawled.

Peter felt as though a hand had covered his mouth, unable to even let out a squeak.

Grant was walking closer now, and Peter backed up until he hit the fridge. He had been in this position before, but this time the trapped feeling wasn’t making him want to push away, this time he felt as if he were anchored to the floor.

He pressed his body down on Peters, and Peter couldn’t help the trembling that he knew Grant could feel.

“Haven’t seen you all day, where have you been?” His voice drops lower “I had so much *fun* last night” He pushes closer, face pressing into Peters neck.

Peter feels his whole body go cold, a river of fear flowing through him.

“Is that Peter in there?” Mays voice yells out.

Peter can hear her walking closer, his eyes shifting to Grant who hasn't moved.

He balls his hands into fits, heart palpitating loudly, *please don't see this May* he begs.

Grant pushed off at the final second, just as May rounded the kitchen, Peter still pressed against the fridge.

“Hey chicken! You're finally up! I was just about to come in and offer you some food, but I can see you beat me to it” she smiles warmly. Her smile falters a bit however when she takes in Peters stance. Frozen and pale, the shakes still vibrating through his thin frame.

“Jesus Pete, you're white as a sheet, what's going on?” she moves forward placing a hand on his forehead. “Do you think you're getting sick?” she fusses.

He can't find the words, he thinks he might be having a panic attack.

No, he's definitely having a panic attack.

His knees drop to the floor heavily, May drops all the same, cradling him as he shakes through the attack. She whispers calmly in his ear as she rocks him back and forth ‘*common sweetie breathe*’ ‘*that's it, just listen to my voice*’ ‘*you can do it Pete, you're doing so well baby*’ ‘*breathe*’

It washes over him until finally the shaking subsides and he's left gasping into her shirt, damp from his tears, he sobs wetly, clutching her weakly.

She keeps rocking him until his gasps turn to pants, and then his pants turn even.

He doesn't know how long they stay like that. May whispering encouragingly in his ear, his tears still gathering in her shirt.

“You back with us honey?” She murmurs against his hair.

He nods softly, bathing in her warm embrace until he finds the strength to pull himself up. She follows him and hold his hand tightly, guiding them both to the couch.

He catches Grant hovering closely behind, he still looks pleased with himself Peter thinks, but there’s also a small hint of nervous apprehension behind his icy eyes. Peter knew why. How could they explain *that*?

She cards her fingers through his hair, soothing him gently. He still feels like he’s in a strange twilight zone, like the last 10 minutes weren’t even real.

Grant sits down on the other couch, May looks at him accusingly.

“What did you say to him? What happened?” Her voice both soft for Peters sake and hysteric in paternal worry.

Grant raises his hands, mirroring her panicked face. “I don’t know hon, I walked in and he was just staring off into space, I tried to talk to him and got nothing... that’s when you walked in... What *was* that?” he spins off, the perfect act.

Peter buries his face deeper into Mays shoulder, not wanting to hear this.

“Panic attack” she says less accusingly now. “Hasn’t had one since for a while, he gets them sometimes... kid’s been through a lot” she says sadly. Peter feels himself warm with embarrassment. He doesn’t want Grant knowing this.

He squirms out of Mays hold and looks at her dejectedly. “Sorry May, I just had a bad nightmare last night... I guess it shook me up more than I thought... I didn’t mean to worry you” he looks down, mumbling through his apology.

She lifts his chin in her soft fingers, “never apologise kiddo. You want to talk about the dream?”

He shakes his head quickly. She understands. He's had nightmares for most of his life. Between his parent's deaths, Ben's death, Spiderman, the Vulture, all the other near-death moments, the people he couldn't save... she's been with him through it all.

She nods. "Okay Pete, you want to climb back into bed?" He nods quickly.

"That's fine sweetie, let's get you in. I think that's enough excitement for you today" she smiles, it doesn't reach her eyes though.

He lets her guide him back into his bunk, pulling the covers over his chest.

"Do you want me to call Tony? I can have him come around for dinner if you like? I know that always makes you feel better."

Peter contemplates it for a moment. He really does miss Tony, but he doesn't think he can lie tonight. Can't make up why he feels so horribly. So he shakes his head and curls up under the sheets.

She brushes his hair back, cradling his chin for moment before walking out turning the light off, closing his door until its left only ajar.

Peter stares at the creak for the rest of the day, and right through the night.

...

Peter wakes up angry at himself for falling asleep. He doesn't know why he's so terrified of Grant coming into his room, he never has before.

He pulls himself up, sitting on the edge of the bed for moment. He feels like shit.

Deciding a shower would make him feel less like shit, he trudges to the adjoining bathroom.

As soon as the hot spray hits his aching body, he knows this was a good idea. His muscles

immediately start to relax, his shoulders unwinding and the shame and humiliation of the past week washing off his scarred body.

He wishes he could just stay under the spray for hours, but he doesn't really fancy angering Grant today.

Once he steps out of the hot steam, he wraps his towel around his waist, opening the door to get back to his room and face the day.

Only he doesn't make it that far. Grant is waiting for him as he steps out, eyeing him hungrily and pushing him by the shoulders into the wall.

Peter's head collides with the wall and he screams internally to try stop the imminent panic attack. His heart racing dangerously and lungs constricting with dread.

Grant's eyes drop down to the towel Peter's got wrapped around him, and Peter feels as good as naked under the gaze.

A blush creeps its way up his chest and all the way up into his hairline. He squirms in embarrassment at the exposure.

"So pretty" Grant breathes. "So pretty and soft like a little girl"

Peter turns his face away, gritting his jaw.

Grant's hands are dragging up and down Peter's bare chest, stopping at the array of injuries, softly brushing over each one. He pushes his fingers in painfully into a deep bruise and Peter is too shocked at the abrupt change of touch that he jerks and gasps.

Grant chuckles, going back to his soft mapping of Peter's goose bumped skin.

Peter fights with every inch of himself not to vomit on Grant's face in his overwhelming fear.

“Wonder what it would take me to do for you to have another one of those little panic attacks huh?” he whispers dangerously.

Peter shakes his head desperately. He doesn’t want to find out, because frankly, at this moment it wouldn’t take a lot.

Grant chuckles. “We will just have to find out” he says in a way that makes Peter know this was going to be a very, very hard week for him.

Grant leans in a just a fraction, sniffing loudly into Peters neck. “You smell just like her” he says dreamily before pulling back just enough for Peter to squeeze his way out of position.

Peter doesn’t wait to see if Grant follows him before rushing into his room and quickly dressing at record speeds.

He tries to catch his breath as he swings wildly around his room. Looking for something to help stop the panic.

His eyes latch onto an old notebook he had kept after a therapist had suggested writing his thoughts down when he was in a panicked state.

Peter tears the note book out, stumbling to his desk and shakily grasping a pen.

He starts to scribble down what he remembers he was supposed to write

1. The thing that made you panic: *Grant*
2. How you felt before you were panicked: *relaxed*
3. How you feel now: *petrified*
4. Why do you think you are upset: *I don’t know what he’s going to do to me*
5. How can you make it go away: *Tell someone*

The writing helps him focus, helps him stop the trembling and helps him swallow the attack from coming to the surface.

He stares at the beaten-up notebook. Remembers how many of these he had been through already. Filled up with his dreams, his fears, his panic attack lists.

Before he realises he was doing it, he's writing down *everything*.

Writing about how terrified he was of Grant, how the touches made him feel, what he wished would happen to Grant if he was discovered.

He writes about what Tony would do, writes about how he could finally be happy again if only Grant was gone.

He makes a hypothetical list of the steps he would need to take to send Grant away. Starting with a camera set up to capture the abuse and finishing with a court case.

He knows he could never complete the list, but it helps him to feel in control as he stares down at his options if he were ever brave enough to take them.

...

Grant does make it his goal to make Peter fall down again in a panic. He almost succeeds too.

Peter is on a constant edge, waiting for the moment his strength wears down completely and the panic erupts from within him like it's been trying to do for the past two days of Grants efforts.

On Monday it was just simply slipping his hand lower and lower down Peters back and front whenever Peter was stuck trapped between Grant and a wall, bench or table while he tried to clean the house as per his chores.

Each time Peter had to bite his lip to suppress the screams he needed to let out.

On Tuesday Grant takes it up a notch. No surprise there. He presses his crotch into Peters backside roughly, ensuring Peter can feel his arousal. He gropes Peters bottom painfully, feeling up his thighs at any chance he can. He forces Peter to clean the floors and anything that requires Peter to be down on his knees and mocks him the entire time.

But Peter's more ready for it this time, knowing Grant wanted to see him break forced him to want to *not* break even more.

When he got to the sanctuary of his room he wrote down all of Grants actions, all of his thoughts and his horrible outcomes of Grants life. He'd never wanted someone dead more.

On Wednesday it happens.

Peter is fulfilling his tasks in the living room, dutifully wiping down the tables and cabinets. They are already spotless from him having done this exact task yesterday, and the day before, and all the other days he's been told to clean the house.

He doesn't think he would be able to get the smell of cleaning citrus out of his skin for a while.

When he's finished he looks around exhaustedly. He was all done for the day, *finally*. Now he could close his door and be in peace until May came home. Grant had barely touched him today, and that in itself should have been the first red flag, but Peter's too tired to think. His deep burning hunger still nagging at him.

He was getting half a meal each day now with May coming home for dinner again. But he would be so wound up from the day that eating more than a few spoonfuls felt like a strenuous task. It was a vicious cycle.

He walks back to his room, immediately his spider sense comes online, flaring almost painfully.

He steps inside, the place torn apart as if a tornado had ripped through. His stomach drops immediately, and he runs to his desk looking for his notebook, knowing instantly that it was what was taken but wishing it was not true all the same.

He hears the front door slam, he turns around terrified rushing to the living room to find it empty. He sprints to the window just in time to see Grant getting into his car, black notebook gripped tightly in his hand.

Peter lets out a desperate cry.



The panic attack hits him so hard its dark by the time he comes back to himself.

The usual eerie calmness that he feels after an attack isn't there though, the desperate sick fear is still rolling through him.

*Where did Grant go?*

When he hears the door finally slam open and closed, his knees buckle, and he falls to the ground ready to face his dreaded fate.

The tears are already streaming down his face, but he's so screwed he can't even begin to conceal them.

Grant comes to a stop directly in front of Peters shaking, sobbing form. He drops the notebook down next to Peters foot. Peter looks between it and Grant desperately. His voice trapped in his throat. Something heavy lands on top of the notebook and Peter looks at it confused.

A pocket knife?

Grant continues to stand over Peter, not moving or speaking. It sets Peters nerves on fire.

He can't stop flickering his eyes between the knife and Grant. Why a pocket knife? Why wasn't Grant screaming at him yet?

Grants phone breaks the silence, its shrill ringing making Peter jump.

Grant answered the phone slowly, stopping to put it on loudspeaker. Peters confusion grows tenfold.

"Hello is this Mr. Bates?" a lady asks on the other end.

"Yes it is, how can I help you?" he asks, his tone sweet, unlike the scowl on his face.

“Mr. Bates there’s been an accident involving your partner, May Parker, I have you as her next of kin” she says, sympathy in her voice.

Peters heart stops.

He scrambles up faster than he thought he could manage. Grant simply pushes him back harshly into the wall, slamming his hand over Peters mouth.

“Oh god. Is she okay? What happened?” His voice drips with concern. His eyes are full of fire.

“She’s in surgery at the moment, she was involved in a car accident. I believe she got a flat tyre and hit a tree. I’m so sorry Mr. Bates.” She continues her back and forth with Grant about Mays condition and when Grant could be there.

But Peter doesn’t hear it.

May was in hospital.

May was in an accident.

He looks down at the floor, at his notebook resting innocently on the wood. The knife lying on top.

Suddenly he gets it.

He stares up at Grant in horror. Grant is watching him now, phone call finished.

Peter pushes Grant away, using his brittle strength.

“WHAT DID YOU DO TO HER?” He screams. He shoves Grant again “WHAT DID YOU DO!”

Grant is seething as he storms back to Peter, delivering a brutal punch to his face. “This is *your* fucking fault Peter. You think you would get away with your little diary entries? I told you what would happen if you crossed me. Look what you did.”

The second panic attack comes on all at once. He screams through this one. Whines, whimpers and shouts. All in his whirlwind of blind terror.

Grant grips him tightly in the midst of it, he throws Peter to the floor before sending him sailing with a rib breaking kick.

Peter’s still howling and stumbling through his attack, unable to control his gross sobs.

“You think you could beat me Peter? Huh?” He slams Peters head into the floor, cracking the skin open painfully.

“You think you could get away with that shit?” He twists Peters arm back, squeezing and pulling until the resounding crack echoes in the air. Peters scream is silenced by Grants hand crushing into his mouth.

The panic attack has stopped now, but the sobbing and wailing hasn’t. Pain drowning him. May hurt, *his fault*, his hurt, *his fault*. It was too much.

Grant was draped across his back now, hand gone from his mouth and now pressing both of Peters hands down in a Y formation to his body.

The pressure on his broken arm is excruciating, and Peters loud groaning and keening is ringing through the apartment.

“Think you can get rid of me that easy Peter?” he says more breathless now. His legs shoves Peters apart, forcing him into an X beneath his heavy body.

Grants hips start to rock against Peters backside, Peter feeling the distinctive pressure pushing against him.

He keens louder, trying to squirm away, but he's too weak, he's in too much pain, he gets nowhere.

"You know *ngh* the last girl of mine had a kid just like you Peter" he moans as he rolls down against Peter. Peters thick shame bubbling through him.

"He was a pretty little thing just like you, *shit*" His hips rut even faster. Peter's losing his will to stay awake.

"Bled so pretty too. I killed them both Peter, do you understand? He tried to tell her so I killed her, and then I killed him" his movements were becoming erratic, moans and gasps blaring in Peters ears.

He feels his own body freeze. Grant had killed people? He had done this to someone else? His brain spun through his questions. Oh god what had they gotten themselves into.

Grant stilled, groaning loudly as Peter felt the back of his sweatpants dampen. He shuddered at the feeling, breathing harshly into the floor.

"You fuck with me again Peter, and I'll kill you both too" Grant spits. He gets up slowly, deliberately putting pressure on Peters broken arm. Peter can barely manage a weak gasp as he does.

As a final kick to the face, Grant toes the notebook so it skitters in front of Peters face as he stalks away.

The third panic attack is dead silent.

...

He spends the next day mostly curled up on the floor in various locations of the house.

Grant, realising he didn't have to clean up after beating Peter, or worry about May seeing injuries,

uses this to his advantage.

When Peter wakes up from falling asleep on the hardwood, its to a boot stepping onto his swollen arm. He can't stop the scream from erupting from his throat.

Grant decides to punish Peter all day for the notebook, and Peter realises he deserves every moment of it.

At some point between the third panic attack and the first nightmare he had decidedly given in. He had no leg to stand on with Grant. To keep May alive, he would endure this until he was inevitably killed by Grants hand.

It gave him comfort to know Tony wouldn't accept his death lightly and would most likely uncover the abuse and get May to safety in time. May would be safe if Peter wasn't alive to be used against her.

When Grant had forced Peter to his knees and told him to brace himself on the wall, Peter didn't hesitate. Just slowly complied, accepting his fate. Grant muttering 40 lashes for the 40 ways Peter could expose Grant that had been written in the notebook.

When the belt came down hard on his back, he bit down the cry.

On the 10<sup>th</sup> hit he couldn't hold them back anymore.

Around the 32<sup>nd</sup> hit he passed out.

Alcohol being poured into the open bleeding cuts is what woke him from that. He flailed and scrambled, but Grant just gripped onto Peters broken arm and twisted until Peter vomited.

And by vomit, that meant bile and water. No food left.

...

When Peter watches the morning sun from his spot in the corner of dining room, dried blood crusting around his face and on the floor around him, he's covered in different wounds. His shirt

soaked from blood and sticking to his skin unbearably, burns litter down both his arms from Grant lighter, cuts line his neck and collarbones, from the same knife that slashed Mays tyres *don't think about her*.

Peter had asked so many times if May was okay, how she was doing, if he could see her. Grant just hit and kicked and cut and burned instead.

He'd watched Grant leave earlier, presumably to go to the hospital to avoid suspicions about his and Peters whereabouts when May was hurt.

He thinks maybe Grant had gone to the hospital yesterday, but he was too in and out of consciousness to really know for sure.

He crawls into the bathroom, unable to stand and dragging himself into the shower, turning the handle from the floor.

The cold water helps to waken him up, and when it finally turns warm he can let it help soothe the last 24 hours.

He's still fully dressed, but this way once his clothes are wet, he can drag them off without tearing the scabs open.

Blood swirls and disappears down the drain, and Peter sobs as he watches the pinky water surround him. How could he survive this?

*For May, For May.*

He dries off, trying to wrap a bandage around his torso to stem the bleeding from his back. He used the final strip left to secure his arm tightly, hoping to aid his healing factor when it decided to do its job again.

He finds his phone tucked away under his mattress, missed calls and texts crowding his notifications, almost all from Tony.

He opened the most recent text from 15 minutes ago.

T.S. - I'll be at the apartment in 30 minutes.

He quickly scrolled up to see the other messages

*T.S. - Hey kid, almost ready for prison break?*

*T.S. - Peter Friday just told me May was in an accident, what's going on?*

*T.S. - Peter were you in the car? Are you okay?*

*T.S. - Peter please answer your phone, please let me know you're okay.*

*T.S. - Spoke to the hospital, heard about Mays condition, do you want me to come over? Are you alone?*

Which lead to the most recent text. Shit, 15 minutes? He quickly found a long sleeve sweater, pairing it with a thick hoody to cover the cuts and burns and bandages and shrugged up his trousers.

He checked himself in the mirror, noting the only visible injury was the bruising on his forehead. He grabbed a beanie and threw it on, pulling it over the bruise and effectively hiding all the evidence.

By the time he's finished manically cleaning all the blood and glass and discarded furniture, the doorbell rung signalling Tony's arrival.

He spins around quickly, trying to see if anything looks out of place before supressing a limp with all his last strength and opening the front door.

"Hey kid" is all Tony has to say before he wraps Peter in a tight hug.

As much as Peter needs and desperately wants the hug to never end, Tony's hands pressing into his torn back is enough for him to deliver a soft pat on Tony's shoulder before pulling himself away.

“God, look at you. I was going to make a few prison jokes, but you look like you’ve actually been in solitary confinement for at least a year” Tony says, and despite the humour of the words, there’s no humour on Tony’s face.

Peter grimaces “I’ve just been really worried about May”. It is true. He had spent the entire day brimming on his panic, desperate to know how May was, if he would be allowed to see her.

“Yeah, shit kiddo. How is she doing? I can’t even imagine what that would have been like for you to have seen her like that in the hospital” he says sympathetically.

Peter puts his head down ashamed. He was a terrible nephew for not having visited her.

“I ... I actually haven’t been to the hospital yet... I don’t even know which hospital she’s in to be honest” he admits quietly.

Tony looks at him in shock. “Have you been here all by yourself since you found out? Where’s Grant?”

“He um – he has been with May at the hospital I guess. I didn’t really know how to get there so I’ve just been here, freaking out.” Half true. “I’m sure Grant will call me if there’s any progress... I don’t think she has woken up yet” he amends. *What if she doesn’t wake up?*

“Alright, grab your stuff, we can go there right now if that’s what you want. I drove here so I can get you to the hospital in 20 minutes tops, and I’ll wait around if Grant’s not there and drive you home. You look like you’ve worried yourself half to death buddy. At least let me ease some of that” He sounds so sincere, and so ready to help Peter in anything he needs.

Peter nods dumbly, God he needed to see her. He couldn’t stand another minute without seeing her face.

“We can go now, I don’t need anything” he says in a rush, desperate to see her. Tony just nods and leads the way out of the apartment.

The drive is pleasant. Peter hadn’t realised how badly he had missed the outside since his punishment had begun. He stares up at each building as they pass, a distant part of his mind can see



himself swinging between each sky scrapper.

*Free.*

*Happy.*

Now the thought of putting the suit on feels like he's committing a fraud.

How could he go back out there when he had put May in a hospital bed? He wasn't a hero anymore. Heroes were brave and righteous and kept everyone safe. Peter couldn't even keep his one family member safe.

Tony talks the whole drive, babbling about technology and projects and DUM-E's new smoothie creations. Peter can see each time his eyes flicker over with worry, his hand gripping the steering wheel tight enough to turn his knuckles white.

The arrive at the hospital and Peter's already wanting to go home. *This was a bad idea. I'm not supposed to leave the house. What will Grant do to her if I've disobeyed.*

But his terror is level with his overwhelming urge to see his Aunt, so he soldiers on. His confidence fluctuating with each step that he takes.

He's too caught up in his own mind, he hadn't even realised that Tony had been to the desk, got directions and had guided them both to her room. Tony keeps his hand on Peters back the entire journey, and the stinging pain actually works to keep Peter focused.

Seeing her though... the stinging pain is nothing compared to the earth-shattering pain that envelops his heart.

She looks as frail as ever, cuts and bandages covering her pale face, tubes and wires latching onto her bare skin drowning her in a sea of equipment.

He turns away to leave, horrified to see her like that, but he collides with a chest and just like that the dams break.

Tony's arms wrap around him tightly again, Peter heaves with his sobs, overcome with emotion. He couldn't lose her too. If he lost her then he wouldn't have anyone left.

Tony coo's gently into his hair. A familiar feeling settles over him as he remembers May doing the exact thing only days ago.

He lets himself cry out the fear of losing May and the horrors of the past day, well really, the past month.

Tony holds him through it, whispering promises into his ear "*she's going to be okay*" "*You're going to be okay*" "*I've got you*"

Peter nods but he doesn't believe it. They were *never* going to be okay.

Finally, he takes a deep breath, Tony notices the end of his crying fit has come and gently releases him, giving an encouraging smile and squeeze as Peter readies himself to face her again.

"Do you mind if I have a minute with her?" His voice sounding wrecked.

"Yeah Pete, I'll be right outside okay?" Peter nods and waits for the sound of the door shutting before he really takes in Mays appearance and sits down beside the bed.

"I'm *so sorry* May" he whispers. "This is all my fault and I'm so sorry"

Her hand is cold as ice in his, the sound of beeping ringing through his ears.

"Please don't leave me, *please wake up*, I can't survive this without you" the tears are back again, he's not sure how he has any left by this point.

He puts his head down on the bed and lets the soft sobs roll through him this time. He hates that this is both the least terrified and the most terrified he has ever felt.

A nurse finally moves him out, she smiles sadly as he says goodbye to his Aunt.

Tony meets him outside, sitting patiently in an uncomfortable chair, Peter waits for him to get up, crack his back and lets his hand resume his spot on Peters back.

They walk in silence back to the car. “Do you want to grab something to eat before we head back? You don’t look like you have eaten in a while?” His voice gentle and calming.

“I need to get back to the house, Grant will probably be home by now” he responds, despite the gurgling of his stomach. “We can get takeaway then, I’m not sending you home until you’ve got something down” he chides, pulling away from the hospital lot.

Peter can’t argue with that. The feeling of eating seems so far away, like he can’t even remember what that had felt like. A simmer of nervousness dwindles under his skin at the thought of Grant would do when Peter comes back.

They end up eating right outside the apartment building, Peter inhaling his burger in no time at all. Tony looks at him concerned. “Jesus kiddo, how long *has* it been since you ate?” he says alarmed.

“Only a couple of days” he lies, “when I get stressed, I just can’t eat” another lie.

Tony frowns and pushes over his half of the fries. Peter takes them gratefully. “Pete, I know this has been hard on you, with your Aunt hurt, but you gotta look out for yourself too. I just don’t want to see this make you go down a bad path you know?” he sighs affectionately.

“And, if you don’t want to stay here, you can stay with me instead until she’s back home” he adds, gauging Peters reaction.

Peters heart stutters at that. *Could he do that?* He imagines how easy it would be to say yes, to start the car and drive back to the tower, and know he could sleep without the fear, know that in the morning he could go *outside* and see May whenever he wanted.

He also imagines Grant hurting May more if he goes. Maybe finding a way to increase her pain in the hospital, or worse yet, make sure she doesn’t survive.

It wouldn't be the first time he'd have killed someone.

He turns away from the light of Tony's offer and succumbs to the darkness of his reality. "I would love that Tony, but Grant needs me, I should stay at home." It hurts to say every word.

Tony grimaces and turns towards Peter. "I know Grant needs you, but Grant has also not made sure you've eaten and didn't take you to see your Aunt" he rebuts. Peter can see the desperation in his eyes. *Let me make sure your safe.*

Peter knows Tony is getting closer and closer to uncovering the truth about what happens behind closed doors, so he redoubles his efforts to keep him away. A phantom pain of the belt colliding with his spine helps him to choke the words out.

"He knows how I get when I'm upset, it probably wasn't good for me to have seen her straight away anyway, I would have been too overwhelmed. You saw how I was today" he mutters embarrassed. "I'm okay Tony really, I really appreciate you coming out here and helping me today. I really appreciate *you*." He adds.

Tony smiles bashfully, and then covers it with a sniff. "You're too valuable to my company to not look after kiddo. Who's going to take over when I keel over"

Peter tries to get over the image of Tony dying, and focus on Tony offering him the company.

"Tony, what do you – I mean – you don't" He splutters.

"God kid, who else do you think I'd leave it to? Some idiot from R&D? You're my heir kiddo, my protégé, the future to my company. May and I already discussed this, we wanted to wait until you graduated at least to let you know, but I guess you know now" he flops his hands out in a shrug, trying and failing to look nonchalant about his admission, he wears his fear of rejection on his sleeve.

Peter doesn't think he would ever find the words to respond with, so he flings himself over the console to pull Tony into an awkward, slightly painful but perfect hug.

“I’m not dying *yet*, buddy, you’ll be waiting a while before you can put your name on the door” he says wetly, trying to hide his relief at Peters response.

“Tony this means the world, you have no idea” Peter tries to say. He feels too overwhelmed to try and think anymore.

It goes quiet for a moment, neither letting each other go. “I thought you were in the car with her” Tony admits so quietly Peter almost doesn’t hear it. “I thought I’d lost you too” Tony’s voice breaks at the end, so inaudible as if it were a deadly secret.

Peter’s not sure if he was supposed to hear that or not, he feels a warm glow spreading through his soul, squeezing just a fraction tighter before pulling away.

“I don’t know what to say Tony, I – Thank you, I won’t let you down” he says strongly, his voice full of conviction.

“I wouldn’t doubt that for a second” Tony says back, with just as much confidence.

It takes all of Peters strength and determination to bring himself to get out of the car. Tony leans out the window “Don’t forget Peter, I’m just a call away okay?” he reminds, Peter nods again, knowing he wasn’t going to call.

“Thanks again Tony, Thanks for *everything*” he smiles, a warm bubble sitting in his stomach as he walks away.

It’s not until he gets to the final step of the stairwell before the bubble bursts and the dread pours out. Grant was going to be pissed.

He gathered the rest of his courage and knocked on the door softly. Immediately it was being slammed open, a hand grabbing his shirt and pulling him inside, slamming the door shut again.

The fear and the panic rise up like a tidal wave.

“Where the *fuck* have you been?” He spits, murderous look in his eyes.

“I just went out for some air, I swear!” Peter pleads, terrified for what the consequences were going to be.

“Yeah? Air? And your little friend *Tony Stark* just happened to be out for air too?” he hisses, pressing Peter hard against the wall.

Peter gasps at that, *Grant had seen them*. “Please Grant, I’m sorry, he just came here because he heard May was in hospital, I didn’t tell him to come” he sobs, hysteric with fear.

“You want me to believe that *Stark* was here to just check up on you? I know what really goes on between you two” he seethes, leaning closer now. Peter whimpers at the pain in his back as the pressure builds in Grants strength.

“You spend your days and nights with him, you grovel at his feet... you’re his little whore aren’t you Pete?” he taunts, Peter shaking his head fiercely “No! It’s nothing like that!” he cries out, how could Grant even think that?

“Yeah? You’re telling me that you don’t roll onto your back when you’re with him, spreading your legs like the slut I know you are. I bet you beg for it. Beg like a dog” he sneers. Hot humiliated tears slip down Peters cheeks. How dare Grant spit on his relationship with Tony like this.

“You’re wrong” Peter whispers, unable to stop himself.

Grant just continues on “did you *thank* him for coming over Peter? Did you get down on your knees and say *thank you* like a good little slut? Like his little bitch ready to take whatever he gives you?”

Peter can’t listen to this anymore, his body coiling from disgust.

“Bet I can give you something better” he smirks. His hand finding Peters throat now, pressing down in a warning.

His other hand moves to his belt, undoing it quickly and leaving it hanging as he undoes the rest of his buttons and unfastens his fly.

Peter looks down, the terror of what Grant was doing, and insinuating had him squirming and pushing, trying to dislodge Grant. But a cheeseburger and some fries aren't enough to get his strength back up and running, so it barely makes Grant stumble.

Grant only moves his hand from Peters throat and moves it to his still broken and excruciating arm, pressing harshly until Peter can't hold the scream in from his bones grinding together.

He holds the arm against the wall, Peter withering to release the unbearable pain, using his free hand to try and pry Grants hand away.

Grant uses his other hand to pull himself out of his pants, Peter sparing a look down before doubling his efforts to free himself.

“Why are you crying Peter, isn't this exactly what a whore like you wants?” he leers.

Peter can only shake his head, terrified, *agonised*.

Grant wrenches Peters 'good' arm away, Peters still shaking his head, begging for this to stop.

He puppeteers Peters hand again, Peter feeling the dejavu from the last time he had been forced against his will like this. This is so much worse.

Peters hand is closed around the hot heavy member, he gags at the feel of it.

His struggles are weak now at best, Grant can see that.

“If you do it right Peter, I'll let her live. I won't go there tomorrow and press a pillow on her face... as much as I want to... if you do this I won't do it” he breathes out, getting airier as he forces Peter to move his trembling hand up and down *up and down*.

Peter feels the loss consume him.

He was never going to win. Grant was always going to win.

The sobs he lets out are heavy and broken with defeat. He moves his hand on his own, not daring to look down.

It feels wrong in his palm, dry and smooth at the same time, horrible horrible *horrible*.

Grant lets go of Peters hand and lets him work by himself. The hand now moves to Peters, neck, moving even higher to the edge of his jaw.

His rough thumb brushes Peter lip, mouth parted slightly as he pants through his tears.

Grant takes that opportunity to press his thumb in, Peter knowing better than to bite, takes that too, his hand moving like a robot, *up and down, up and down*.

The saltiness on his tongue from Grants ministrations in his mouth and the disgust from what his own hand is doing is more dizzying than whatever was in that drink all those nights ago. He can feel his psyche breaking with every move of his hand, with every moan that Grant lets out into his ear.

“Is he as big as me? Do you beg him to let you touch him like this? Does he let you taste him... I bet that’s all you need... to be filled up, covered in him... like his whore” Grant moans, hot breath vibrating in Peters ear.

Peter just moves *up and down, up and down*, hot tears still flowing down his reddened face.

Grant removes his thumb and replaces with his index and middle finger. Peter winces in alarm, stuttering his movements. Grant’s hips jerk as a reminder to keep going, and Peter obeys, cautious to the obstruction scrapping at his pallet.

Grants moans are getting louder now, his hand tightening on Peters damaged arm, Peters own hand tightening in response around the throbbing member. The fingers in Peters mouth push further back, and Peter has to squeeze his eyes shut to hold back the gag.

The fingers are persistent, pushing back deeper until Peter can’t suppress the gag this time, retching



wetly and horribly. He speeds up his ministrations, hoping that would be the end of this.

“Look at you, so eager, such a pro when it comes to whoring yourself out” his voice a continuous moan. Peter whines around the fingers, humiliated and ashamed.

The fingers press on the back of his throat, earning another disgusting gag and lurch from Peters stomach. Grant rides out his orgasm by jutting his hips harder into Peters hand and hitting his hip.

Peter has to hold back a howl as Grant leans down onto his shattered bone as he calls out in ecstasy. The hot thick liquid spills over Peters fist, and he lets go quickly as if he had been burned.

The fingers push deeper one final time, and Peter cant push it down any more, Grant moving just enough out of the way for Peter to spill the contents of his lunch out on to the floor boards.

Grant sends a brutal punch into Peters still bruised head, causing him to slump to the floor weakly.

He tucks himself away as he watches over the sobbing, coughing teenager.

“I told you, you can eat when I tell you that you can eat” he spits. “and I don’t want you seeing that man anymore. If you’re anyone’s whore, its mine” he warns, storming away when he sees Peter nod faintly.

Peter sits in that spot and cries until the horrid liquid on his hand is dry and the beating of his miserable heart settles, and for the first time, he wished that his heart would just stop beating all together.

## Chapter End Notes

It was just as hard for me to write as it probably was for you to read :( Baby boy hurtin good :(

Also, I made a tumblr (mostly just to post the story board lol) so if you have any questions about the fic- come shoot me an ask :) [ironwebbs.tumblr.com](http://ironwebbs.tumblr.com)

## Chapter 6

### Chapter Notes

Good lord!! Heres 10k words to make up for the wait! This took a lot of time as its a bit of a filler, and Ive been slammed with life. Please excuse the much more spread out uploads. I dont plan to take more than 2 weeks between each one, and we are on the home stretch!

AND WOW! Thank you all so much for the comments on the last chap and all your awesome messages on the tumblr!! Amazing!!

Be warned - alot more graphic sexual abuse in this chap and alot of iron dad love.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Grant actually decides to play the role of caring boyfriend as May starts to rouse from her coma, leaving Peter at home for hours, fretting over her condition.

After the incident with Peter having left with Tony, Grant had confiscated Peters phone, reasoned with: Peter having obviously been texting Tony to come and get him like a '*baby*'.

Peter feels truly alone for the first time.

Knowing that he couldn't find solace in Tonys comfort on the other side of the city and knowing May wasn't coming home hit him hard. The vice grip around his stomach continued to increase knowing May was suffering and Grant was the only one with her. What if Grant did something? Or said something?

What if he made May hate him for not coming to visit?

Peter had no way to defend himself, not like this.

Not when he could barely stand without getting dizzy from the lack of food, or tearing open the frustratingly unhealed wounds encompassing his body. The cuts on his back still wept from time to time, and he could feel the tugs and pulls all over his body from the beaten and bruised muscles.

Not to mention his arm.

He had almost broken his teeth trying to bite down the scream as he attempted to set the splintered bone. He doesn't know how good of a job he had done, but it had been enough to make the pain ease a fraction as he tightly bandaged the appendage and snuck some ice packs and aspirin into his room in the middle of the night.

Finding a newfound safety in the darkness of his room, Peter sat in the corner, facing the door, waiting for when Grant would come and find him.

It was pointless to sit pressed up against the door anymore, Grant could easily push through. No, he preferred to watch it now. Watch the knob closely if it were to be turned.

Maybe this was another punishment. Having him wait for the inevitable... never knowing when it was going to come. Seeing the shadows start to take shapes and move around him, sneaking up behind him as he pressed his ruined back further into the wall.

Peter had been through the ways this could play out too many times. Grant would take and take *and take* until Peter had nothing left to give, and then Peter would have to go and hope that Tony took care of the rest.

But how could he burden Tony with that? Burden him with the knowledge that he had counted on him only *after* he was to finally give in?

It hurt too much to think about Tony anymore, the brightness that accompanied any thought of Tony was too good for this hell.

He brought his knees up to his chest and rested his forehead there, squeezing his eyes shut and trying to wipe his mind of any thought.

His attempts were cut short by the slam of the front door, heavy footsteps signalling Grants arrival home.

Peter had to press his fingers into the backs of his knees to stop himself from jumping up to ask about Mays condition and progress. Asking only meant no answers for another day. He had to be told on Grants terms and only if he 'deserved it'.

It was frustrating as hell.

Minutes turned into hours as Peter waited for Grant to make his move. And when the call came, he wished he hadn't spent his last moments of peace thinking about the devil himself.

Slowly he pulled himself out of the tight coil he had been sitting in, swaying dangerously with vertigo. Stumbling out of the door, not before steadying himself on the frame, he made his way hesitantly to the couch in which Grant was waiting for him on.

"Sit." Is all Grant says.

It's enough to have Peter scrambling to obey, ignoring the dizziness from moving too quickly.

"I spoke to Craig from next door. Told me that little Oliver is celebrating his tenth birthday this weekend." He says simply, using a bottle opener to remove the lid from his beer.

Peter frowns at the interesting conversation starter. Peter had known the neighbours for years now, babysitting and tutoring Oliver ever since he'd moved in. He hadn't ever known Grant to be communicating with them too.

"Cute little thing, isn't he?" Grant smiles, pausing in thought before continuing. "Craig tells me you look after him sometimes. Maybe you should bring him here the next time they ask you."

Peter stills. He looks over at Grant, hoping the double meaning was just a misinterpretation. He knows that's not the case when he sees Grant's dark look.

"Grant..." Peter starts. A tremor already thrumming through his body.

"Or maybe I'll just tell Craig that I'll watch him myself next time. Have a little fun you know?" Grant continues, shrugging in feigned nonchalance.

"Please don't" Peter whimpers. How could Grant even think about that. Oliver was only a child.

“How about the little girl in 13b? I know her parents are always working the nightshift. I could help out and have her sleep here.”

“Grant *please*” Peter says, desperation leaking into his voice. Why was Grant wanting to hurt these children? Had Peter not done enough to protect them all from this horrible fate?

“See Peter, the thing is... Men like me... we have urges. And we need to fulfil those urges. Do you understand what I’m saying?” He turns more to Peter, and Peter’s not really sure he does understand.

“These urges are hard to ignore Pete. If I didn’t have you I would have no choice but to go out to little Oliver and little baby Grace.”

Peter thinks he’s starting to get it now.

“I’m here, you don’t need to touch them... *Please don’t touch them*” he begs. Frantic energy filling him up, begging Grant to feel fulfilled with just Peter.

“You *are* here Peter. But if you weren’t... you understand what I’d have to do?” he says with a horrible calmness.

Peter nods his head. “Yes, I understand, please you have me, you don’t need them.”

Grant smirks and raises an eyebrow. Peter is desperate for him to give an affirmation that he won’t touch the next-door neighbours. But Grant only slides forward and reaches for the table, pulling an empty glass towards him.

He fills the glass with some of his beer, before reaching into his pocket and pulling out a small white pill.

He moves slowly, enough so that Peter sees the pill and has enough time to comprehend what it is before it even hits the bottom of the glass, fizzing and dissolving into the liquid.

Grant picks up the drink and holds it out to Peter, eyes challenging.

Peter braces himself and reaches out for the glass, only taking a millisecond before tipping the contents into his mouth and swallowing his grimace.

*He could do this.*

This is what he could actually do. Protect those innocent children.

Grant smiled, pleased. He took back the glass and patted the spot directly next to him on the couch.

Peter stood and sat back down where directed, close enough for their thighs to brush.

“You know what to do.” Grant said simply, sitting back against the sofa.

Peter buried his shame, humiliation and disgust, and focused solely on the faces of the children on the other side of the walls. He moved forward, unzipping Grants pants and reaching inside to grip shakily at the throbbing and already hard member waiting for him.

His head was starting to lose focus already, the drug taking its toll.

Peter welcomed it this time. Letting his thoughts spiral alongside the room, spinning in and out, like a kaleidoscope.

He could still feel the hot skin beneath his palm, but he felt detached from it. Like he was floating.

He preferred floating over feeling.

He kept his drooping eyes faced forward, even when Grant jerked slightly forward to bury his teeth in Peters neck. He didn't even flinch when Grant begun to whisper filthily into his ear about his eagerness and sluttiness. Peter didn't even feel the nausea when the hot dribble of Grant's unwelcome pleasure coated his fingers, seeping between the cracks of his knuckles.

Grant shoved him hard to the floor, causing Peter to knock his head painfully into the coffee table. Peter watched through his eyelashes as the blob of swirling blacks that made up Grant readjusted and begun to walk away.

Before he was out of Peters sight, he spoke up, voice gruff and as if it were underwater in Peters muddled head. “She was awake for a couple of minutes today. They took her off the ventilator” he says simply before walking out of eyesight.

Peter let the words rush over him hand in hand with the waves of the drug coursing through his bloodstream. *May was awake. I need to keep them safe* running through his head like a mantra.

Peter distantly wishes he had someone to keep *him* safe.

...

By the time May had been in hospital for a week, Peter had only been told of her condition 3 times.

Each time was after he had sipped the horrible concoction and let his hand move autopilot to bring Grant off.

Peter wasn't sure why Grant was bothering to drug him, given that he would have done what he wanted anyway.

He had a responsibility to keep the kids safe. To keep May safe. He wasn't going to jeopardize that.

But it did help in its own way. The drug was taking longer to wear out of his system now that he wasn't eating more than a few crackers and a small bowl of rice that Grant would give him each day.

The long aftershocks of the drug had him paralysed on the floor until it had finished running its course, and that sometimes took hours.

So the time was passing quickly.

Peters not even sure what day of the week it is when Grant whispers in his ear that May was out of the bed that day and walking around, but he feels a fizz of hope push through the drowsy haze and continues to move his hand up and down.

He has a couple of hours each day of clarity that he uses to stare out the window from his place on the floor, thinking about how sad he was to be giving up Spiderman.

Obviously he couldn't do that anymore.

If he was patrolling and wasn't home at night, Grant would take one of the other kids. Spiderman couldn't let that happen.

A bonus of the drugged state was that he couldn't do much to anger Grant, which gave his body the time and rest it needed to heal properly. He could feel his dulled healing factor knitting together the cuts and burns, his bones fusing and the pain dwindling.

The pain in his heart stayed the same but Peter suspected even his healing factor had its limitations.

His fingers itched with the need to call someone, *Tony*, but his stomach clenched in dread at Tony finding out about the things Grant had said about them. Would he be disgusted and not want to see Peter anymore?

Peter couldn't lose Tony. He couldn't survive that.

Maybe it was best that Tony was distanced from him now. That way he wouldn't be so hurt when Peter finally gave in.

Hadn't he already given in though?

Peter is broken from his thoughts by Grant coming to stand behind him from where he was leaning on the window sill.



“Time for bed Pete.” He says in a sickly gentleness.

Peter manages a nod and begins to move away from the window to his bedroom. Grant’s hand says otherwise as he clamps down on Peter’s forearm and leads him towards the other end of the apartment.

Confused, Peter stumbles along, desperate to obey.

When he finds himself in Grant and Mays room, he hesitates, unable to force his feet to move any further from where they had planted themselves.

Grant gives him no such luxury of stopping, and drags him along anyway, closer to the bed in the middle of the room.

Peter is taken back to the countless times he had found himself tucked into that bed. First between May and Ben, and then just curled around May.

Did Grant have to ruin those memories too?

“In you get” Grant says, watching Peter challengingly.

Peter hesitates some more. A bed symbolised a lot of things. A lot of things Peter was *not* ready for. Or would *ever* be ready for.

“I won’t ask twice Peter” his voice colder now, less room for debate.

Peter steels himself and tentatively peels the sheets back, before climbing in and pushing himself as close to the edge as he can get without falling off.

He grips the sheets in his fist so hard he can feel his hand cramping. But that’s a better distraction than the dip of the bed as Grant climbs in next to him.

The dip moves closer, like a tsunami, until Grants heat is pressed up against Peters back, a heavy

hand wrapping around Peters waist, the other slipping into the thick hair at the back of Peter's head, securing him tightly.

Peter can feel the prickle of adrenaline fear spiking as Grant clutches him tighter.

Grant presses his face into the back of Peters neck, inhaling forcefully. Peter can feel the now familiar pressure on his lower back where Grant drapes over him.

"You've been so good Pete... *so good*" Grant moans, circling his hips for emphasis.

"Think you deserve this" he adds, before the hand on his waist moves lower, until it's pressing roughly on the front of Peter's sweats.

Peter squeezes his eyes shut so hard he sees stars dance behind his eyelids. Rolls of disgust flow through him so viciously he almost can't feel the touch at his crotch.

Grant is still rotating his hips as he tries to bring Peter off, but the fear is too potent and despite Peters teenage hormones, the half assed attempt is unsuccessful.

Grant seems content however, rolling lazily, alternating between rubbing his palm on Peters crotch and delivering tight squeezes that make Peter wince and whine.

The hand in Peters hair forces his head backward, until Grant is able to lean over him, slamming his lips brutally down on Peters.

Peter wriggles, shaking his head to dislodge the disgusting mouth, but only succeeds in pressing his ass back into Grant further and earning a deep guttural moan.

Stuck between not wanting to aid in Grants pleasure and needing to expel the bile sitting high in his throat, Peter locks his body, freezing in trepidation.

Grant continues to press down on Peter's clenched lips, messily moving around his mouth and cheek, leaving a trail of saliva. He moves further down to Peters neck, giving Peter enough room to catch his breath, and leaves sloppy kisses there too.

The hips rolling into his backside now are less lazy, and more robust, pressing painfully against him.

The hand still fumbling at Peters groin is starting to cause a chafe, rough and determined. Peter has never felt less aroused in his life despite the hand trying to bring pleasure.

Peter keeps quiet through the ordeal, his eyes still clenched shut, letting his body be manipulated and moved to Grants disposal until he feels the shuddering of hips behind him signalling *hopefully* the end.

Peter hopes he will be let back into his own bed now.

Apparently, Peter deserves no such luck, and finds himself trapped under the heavy arms of Grant, who is now breathing softly into Peters ear.

“She’s coming home tomorrow” he says quietly before beginning to snore.

Despite his eyes being closed, Peter doesn’t sleep a wink.

. . .

When May comes home, Peter doesn’t even have the energy to hold in his tears. He wraps his frail arms around her and sobs into her neck.

They sit on the couch while he babbles out how much he missed her, and how worried he was and if she was okay.

She reassures him gently, brushing his hair back and cuddling back just as tight.

Peter gets a better look at her when his tears begin to clear, her pale face slightly gaunt with yellow bruising and faded cuts littering her face and jaw. Her wrist still in a brace, and a slight hunch over

where he knew a nasty gash lay under her rib from the spray of glass.

Even though she looks like she had been through hell, she looked so much better than she had when he had seen her in the hospital all those days ago.

“I’m so glad you’re home and you’re okay” he whispers. He’s so grateful he can feel the bubbling of tears again.

“I know sweetie, I know. I’m sorry I worried you, I’m okay now” she reassures, clutching onto his thick sweater fondly. He wore it to conceal the bruises on his neck and the jutting of his bones.

It doesn’t work.

“Peter you look like a ghost, with how you’re looking so thin. Have you not been eating while I’ve been in hospital?” She fusses, eyes darting over his bony wrists and hollow cheeks.

“I couldn’t eat knowing you weren’t okay. I just felt so sick with worry” he covers. Not a total lie.

She looks unconvinced. Eyebrows creasing in concern.

“Why don’t you go freshen up and then we can have something to eat together, now you know I’m okay you can have a proper meal young man, before you fade away.”

Peter smiles slightly, so happy to have her back. He nods and gets up, shutting his eyes with the dizzy spell and hoping he was subtle enough to let it go undetected.

He moves to the bathroom, stopping only when he hears the start of the conversation in the other room. He quickly turns on the shower and presses his ear to the door to listen in, catching the back end of a sentence.

“He’s fifteen years old, I don’t care if he’s stressed, it’s *your* responsibility to make sure he’s eating” Mays voice rings out, high pitched with fretfulness.

“What did you want me to do May? Force feed him? The kid barely came out of his room once this week! I was busy enough coming to check on you!” He bites back.

“That’s not good enough! Peter is the first priority, you make sure he is okay and *then* you come to me... that how it works when you have children” she says back, voice cold and determined.

Peter winces at the reference of Grant being a parent to him, not wanting that to ever be assimilated to their relationship.

“He’s a grown up, he can look after himself. And if he can’t, well then that’s his fault” Grant says flippantly, Peter can imagine the eye roll.

“Don’t you dare. You have been nothing but dismissive to that kid for the past few months, I don’t know what he could have done to you to deserve that, but you need to sort that out. I won’t have you treat him like that Grant. He’s a good kid dammit!” Her voice raising with every syllable.

Peter feels both pride at May finally standing up, and dread at the thought of Grant retaliating with anger towards her. Potentially with violence.

“And don’t think I haven’t noticed this place reeking like beer and looking like an absolute pigsty. For someone who’s home all day you would think you could pick up your crap!” she continues, seemingly on a roll.

“I am grateful for what you did for me this week in the hospital, but Grant, if you can’t get yourself together, I think we may have a problem here” she says, quieter now, less hysteric.

“What are you implying May?” Grant says, cold and accusing.

“I’m *implying* that if you don’t behave better around Peter and start taking some responsibility around the kid, and you don’t get your act together, we might need to think about where this relationship is heading” she clarifies, sarcasm and defiance in her speech.

Could she break up with him and end Peters suffering?

A selfish part of Peter wishes she would, but he knows Grant will only move on to hurt another kid, and another and another. The trapped feeling consumes him.

The conversation is seemingly over, though Peters not sure he heard the end of it.

He jumps into the shower, washing quickly to avoid wasting water, and hoping out with his towel around his waist.

When he turns the handle to open the bathroom door, another body is pushing forward, sending him stumbling into the bathroom as the door is reclosed and Grant stares at him furiously.

Peter retreats until his back hits the wall, Grant stalking closer.

He presses a clammy hand to Peters mouth before slamming his fist into Peters stomach, sending Peter doubling over in pain, whimpers silenced in the palm.

Another fist comes sailing down, harder this time.

“Apparently I need to take responsibility for you huh? You little whore. I need to watch out for a slut like you because you can’t take care of yourself” He seethes, delivering blow after blow into Peters stomach.

Peters whines are louder, spittle collecting behind Grants hand.

“She’s going to leave me unless you get your shit together” Grant hisses, another punch hitting him directly in the rib.

*No*, Peter thinks, she’s leaving unless *you* get your shit together.

Grant releases Peter, and Peter can’t help but slide to the floor to muffle his pained groans.

Grant storms out, not bothering with any other conversations, and Peter is left to cradle his bruising torso, blessedly, alone.

. . .

He spends his day curled up around May on the couch, letting her talk to him about her recovery and how the hospital had been for her. She never asks him why he didn't visit her after she woke up, but he assumes Grant had already formulated the lie and fed it to her.

She asks him about what he had done during the week, and he looks at her confused.

"I was grounded? I've been here..." he wasn't sure why she wouldn't have remembered that.

"Oh Pete! God I thought with everything going on you would have forgotten about that... I surely did. *You're too good.* I think you've learnt your lesson now" she smiles sweetly. He had indeed learnt his lesson. And many other lessons along the way.

"Why don't you go spend the day at the tower tomorrow then?" she suggests, running her hand through his hair.

"No no, I want to stay here with you" he responds quickly, not wanting her out of his sight until he knew she was stronger, just in case Grant turned on her too.

"I have more physical therapy at the hospital for the wrist and to get the stitches checked up, I'll be gone most of the day honey. Call Tony. I'm sure he's missing you"

He contemplates arguing, but she would get suspicious. He does want to see Tony, finally get out of the suffocating house and get into a safe haven.

"Only if Grant is going with you. I don't want you to be alone" he says, half true, the other half so Grant wasn't alone when Peter was away.

"Of course honey. You don't need to worry about me anymore." She says gently.

"Can I borrow your phone then? To call Tony and see if that's okay?" he asks, just hearing Tony's

voice was already making a calming warmth settle around him.

“What’s wrong with your phone? Did you break it again?”

He hesitates for a moment, before deciding to tell the truth.

“Grant confiscated it as part of my punishment” he says meekly, staring at his hands. Was she going to take back her offer to let him go out?

Her eyes darken, and he shrinks back. She softens when she sees his reaction, and simply pulls out her phone and hands it to him.

She pats him on the head and gets up from the couch. “Call Tony” she says sympathetically before walking away.

He presses call as soon as he can’t see her anymore, he hears her “You took his fucking phone?” just before she closes the door to the bedroom when Tony answers.

Peter lets out the breath he was holding as Tony begins his questioning, *how are you feeling, Is she home now? Do you need anything? Of course you can come over, I’ll pick you up in the morning.*

It feels so good to have his two people back in his life again. The horrible darkness that Grant had enveloped him in feels less prominent now.

He feels safe again.

He knows he shouldn’t, but feeling good in this hell was too addictive.

...

As soon as he and Tony are back in the lab it’s like nothing had changed.



They dance around each other, bouncing ideas around and fiddling with machinery and equipment. Tony smiles fondly every time Peter corrects him or announces an idea, and Peter leans into every warm touch and praise that Tony gives him.

If Tony notices, he doesn't mention it.

When the sky begins to darken, Tony puts his hand over Peter's, stopping him from touching anymore equipment that was surrounding his station.

"Come on, let's sit for a bit and then I'll take you home" he says kindly, already steering Peter towards the elevator.

They sit on the couch together in the living room, Tony watching Peter sceptically.

"Alright I'm going to say it. You look like shit kid. I'm sorry but it's the truth. Spill. What is going on" he says bluntly, the edge of concern still there.

"It's nothing" Peter retaliates. "I've been worried sick about May and everything going on"

"Yeah that's not going to cut it. I've given you enough space, now I'm adult-ing up. Time to tell me what's really going on. This has been happening long before May was hurt."

Peter looks down, searching for an excuse.

"I don't know. I guess I've just been struggling a bit... adjusting to Grant being around, Spiderman stuff and like you know, school and stuff..." he says shyly. It's as close to the truth as he can manage.

Tony sighs. He doesn't completely buy it but can see the truth in the words.

"You can put the brakes on Spiderman for a bit if you need. You're just a kid, no one is judging you for needing a break, and as for school, you're on holidays now, surely that's less stressing?"

Peter nods. “Nobody knows I’m a kid though. People are already talking about me not being out there these last few weeks... but I just don’t feel like myself at the moment” It feels good to speak about this and not feel like he was hiding everything.

Tony hums. “And what about Grant? Why are you struggling to adjust to him? Is he bothering you at all?” he says cautiously. Peter knew it was only a matter of time before Tony started asking questions like that. He was too smart to be fooled.

Peter looks down, worried to say anything now just in case the truth slipped out. “It’s not so much him as it is me. I can’t tell him about Spiderman, so he just gets mad about me sneaking out and stuff...”

“And when he gets mad ...” Tony questions, trailing off to allow Peter to fill in the blanks.

“Nothing, he just yells a bit. I know he gets worried about me. May thinks he sees himself as a parent now or something.” He shrugs, the lies feeling like bile.

“And do you?” Tony prompts.

“Do I what?” Peter replies confused.

“Do you see him as a kind of parent?” He finishes, staring to gauge the reaction.

Peter purses his lips and looks away. “No” he says simply. “That spots already taken” he says shyly, the floor suddenly more interesting than this conversation.

Tony doesn’t respond for a moment, and then he just places his hand gently on Peter’s shoulder, giving a warm squeeze. Peter flicks his eyes up briefly to see Tony clenching his jaw tightly, and for a moment he thinks he’s made him mad. But then he sees the glimmer in Tony’s eyes and he feels a heat in his heart at Tony’s attempt to keep his emotions in check.

It reaffirms how much Tony has indeed filled the spot Peter had been searching for ever since he’d lost Ben.

“I think if he’s getting mad, you tell May. Or you can blame me. I don’t care if he’s mad at me, I’d rather he be angry at me than you kid” His face has the dark and concerned lines, unconvinced but still not prepared to push too hard.

Peter would rather die a thousand deaths than have Grants anger aimed at Tony.

But he nods his head anyway. “It’s not that bad, nothing I can’t handle. I think it’s just been a really long couple of months for me... I’m sorry I made you worry.”

Tony squeezes harder around the shoulder, “At least eat more Pete, I can see your ribs through your shirt. With your metabolism, you need to be eating more than the rest of us. I thought we’d been over this” he sighs.

“I *am* eating now... when I’m stressed I don’t-”

“You don’t eat, yeah I know” Tony interrupts “But stress less and fill your plate buddy, otherwise I’m going to start sending a suit three times a day to the house to bring you each meal and make sure you eat it” he smiles, and Peter beams back.

“And what happened to the big birthday countdown? I had to listen to you yab about being 16 from 364 days to go and suddenly you’re not counting? Even though it’s in ... what? Four days?” He teases. It was true, Peter had been counting down ever since his fifteenth birthday... but lately he had forgotten all about it.

Suddenly the idea of celebrating felt wrong. How could he be happy and celebrate a birthday milestone with the storm over his head? He stared hard at the floor to warn away the tears. He didn’t want to miserable on the day he had been most excited about.

Tony senses his misery quickly.

“What’s the matter Pete? Did I say something?” He frets, worry evident in his tone.

“No! It’s just, I forgot about it, you know? Just thought about how if May hadn’t been so lucky, how different this birthday would have been.” He amends, hoping to settle Tony’s panic. It works as expected and his eyes soften.

“Yeah, she’s a tough lady. I can see where you get it from” he grins, but there’s a poorly hidden layer of concern swimming in his eyes.

Peter smiles back, feeling less on edge now he could steer the conversation away from these dangerous waters.

They eventually (and regretfully) pull themselves off the sofa and head for the car, Tony insisting on driving them back to the apartment.

He offers to buy another cheeseburger for the drive, but Peter feels the phantom pains of Grants nails on his pallet and the horrible squelch of vomit that followed and shakes his head quickly.

They make it to the apartment block and Peter readies himself to say his goodbyes, though he’s never really ready to leave their little bubble. But Tony’s getting out of the car and locking it behind him, joining Peter at the front of the lobby. Peter stares at him with confusion, but Tony just steps ahead of him and begins the climb to their floor. “I want to see May if that’s okay?” he throws back when he sees Peter still hovering at the bottom of the stairwell.

Peter hesitates before nodding and trailing behind him. His mind races with the implications of this. Grant would be livid if he were to see Tony in the house. Peter’s not even sure May had told him that he had been at the tower all day. Hot dread pools in his belly, terrified of what the consequences for him would be.

When they arrive at the door, Peters hands are shaking with anticipation, he mentally prays that Grant has gone out, but he’s getting more doubtful with each passing second as he turns his lock in the key hole.

Grant is waiting by the dining table when Peter walks in. His mouth opens to speak, before his eyes flick over Peters shoulder to where Tony has now strolled in. His eyes darken considerably when he locks eyes with Peter, and Peter feels himself shrink under the gaze.

“How’s it going Stark?” he says, offering out his hand, which Tony takes and shakes back politely.

“Good as can be Grant, Happy I’ve got my right-hand man back” he grins, flashing a toothy smile at Peter, who ducks his head bashfully.

Grant watches with dangerous eyes “Yeah well, glad he’s getting out of the house again. What can I do for you” he says sharply, voice gruff and unwelcoming.

Tony frowns but doesn’t let it faze him, “I was actually hoping to check in on May ... see how she was holding up.”

“She’s fine, she’s having a rest now. Long day with physical therapy and all” he says, turning away and walking towards the kitchen.

“Can I grab you a beer Stark?” he calls out, “I’m right thanks” Tony responds, eyes tightening a fraction.

Peter feels his body tighten with trepidation. Grant drinking was never a good mix, especially when he was already angry, and Peters enhanced senses let him know that this wasn’t Grants first beer of the night.

Grant comes back into the room, cradling the bottle in his hand tightly. “So, what did you two get up to today then? I’m sure you had *a lot* to catch up on.” The words seem innocent, but Peter knows what he is insinuating, and looks down as shame flushes up to his ears.

“Yeah we just worked on some of the aerodynamic energy products Tony is trialling” Peter says quietly. Hoping Tony would leave but desperately wishing he would stay.

“Not sure how much of a great help you would be in that Pete, seems a little advanced” he mocks, and Peter feels the humiliation spread like wildfire.

Tony tenses noticeably, “Actually, Peter was the one that came up with the idea. He’s very intelligent. Keeps *me* on my toes” his words a lot less polite and a lot more sharp.

“And that’s why you don’t have any friends” Grant laughs, slapping Peter roughly between the shoulder blades, causing Peter to stumble in embarrassment.

The humiliation is drowning him.

Tony's eyes darken, and he steps forward towards Grant. Peter feels momentarily pleased to see Grant step back.

"You watch how you speak about him" Tony warns. "Kids got more potential in his thumb than you have in your whole body" he says through his teeth, oozing with intimidation

Grant clenches his jaw, eyes hardening "And I'd watch how you speak to me under my roof" he retaliates, words just as sharp.

Peter feels at a loss, eyes darting frantically between the two aggravated men.

"Guys please" he starts, hoping to diffuse the situation.

"Shut up Peter" Grant snaps back.

"Don't you dare speak to him like that" Tony near shouts, stepping further into Grants space, Grant rising to the challenge steps right back towards Tony, both close enough to touch now.

"Tony don't, it's okay" Peter pleads, and Tony shoots him a strained look.

"Yeah *Tony* it's *okay*" Grant teases, sneering at the two.

"What is this Grant? What are you trying to achieve" Tony says, trying to dampen his challenging attitude to abide by Peter.

"Maybe I just enjoy riling up the big bad billionaire. Or was there a playboy in there too still? Guess you aren't the only one enjoying his sweet company Petes" he spits, a clear humour in his eyes at getting the reaction he wanted when Tony's fists clench.

"And you're drunk. Not surprising, guess that just makes you a loser then... no fun alliteration for you" Tony grins, turning away with disinterest.

Peters panic is clawing up his throat. Grant was going to snap. And who was going to be in the line of fire?

Grants hand clamps down viciously on Tony's arm, spinning him back around with his other fist clenched and slightly raised.

Tony sees and raises his eyebrow, slapping the hand away and stepping in front of Peter. A dangerous glint in his eye.

"Peter you're coming with me. You can sleep at the tower tonight." He says, no room for discussion.

Peter's shaking with a dormant panic attack, his eyes meet Grants over Tony's shoulder and sees him mouth '*I'll kill them all*'. Peter heart clenches and he shuts his eyes in frustration.

"It's fine Tony, please just go. I'll wake May up... he's just drunk." He tries to reason, but Tony's already moving them to the door.

"Peter no. I'm not letting you stay here" he says back, pulling tighter at Peters wrist.

"*Tony*" Peter says louder, getting Tony's attention enough for them to stop moving "I'm staying here, seriously, this is just a misunderstanding and an overreaction! If you leave, it will be better" he pleads.

Tony stares at him, searching for the opportunity to resist. Peter hardens his own glare, feigning confidence to help win this battle. Tony's shoulders drop and he sniffs to cover up his distaste for the decision. "I'm a call away. He tries anything..." he threatens, eyes darkening as he locks eyes with Grant again. "I know, I know, please just go" Peter begs, practically pushing Tony to the door.

They spare a look together before Peter is closing the door gently, resting his forehead against the cold wood. He focuses his hearing on Tony's body, hearing him wait at the door for a few moments in hesitation before he retreats down the stairs. Peter even hears as Tony slams his fist angrily into the dry wall by the exit.

When he can't hear Tony anymore he turns slowly to face Grant. Grant who is seething, staring at Peter with unconcealed hatred.

“I – Grant I’m sorry – please don’t – he’s just protective” Peter stutters, trying to resolve the situation. Grant pitches his bottle forward, the glass shattering millimetres from Peters head on the wall, shards raining over his face.

Peter shuts his eyes in a flinch, and then stares in disbelief at Grant.

“I’ll fucking ruin him” Grant yells. “I’ll ruin his perfect little life.”

Peter whimpers “Grant no, please, he didn’t – you don’t need to – please!”

“How dare he insult me in my own home Peter. You let him in here and let him speak to me like that. Like I’m a child. I’ll fucking end him. Bet the media would have a field day if I told them about your late-night phone calls, your weekend sleepovers, your gifts and sponsorships... bet they would know straight away what a pervert that man is” he sneers, and Peter whitens.

“*Don’t!* Grant, please no!” he cries, hot tears streaming down his pale cheeks.

“I could send them your journal entries; about how much Tony means to you... I can send them the photos I have of him hugging you... he would *never* come back from that. Serves the prick right” he spits, turning away as if to action his plan.

Peter lunges with desperation, gripping Grants arm and spinning him back around. “Grant *please!* I’m begging you, leave him out of this. It’s my fault, take it out on me. *Please.* I’ll do whatever you want”

Grant seems to consider this for a moment. “You would, wouldn’t you? You’d do *anything* to protect your *Tony*” he says lowly, a glint of malice in his eyes.

Peter nods, hiccupping with sobs.

“How about you get down on your knees then Peter” he smiles darkly, and Peter sinks instantly, ready to play Grants sick games and beg for Tony’s life.



When Grant starts to unbuckle his pants slowly, Peter realises this isn't about begging.

"You bite and I'll call the police on him in seconds" he growls, freeing himself from his pants and stepping closer to Peter.

Peter's eyes go wide, "But May-" he says stunned knowing she could walk in at any moment.

"I've handled her" he says with a smirk, eyes glancing over to the counter and then back to Peter. Peter follows the eye line and sees a strewn bottle of pills spilling onto the dining table.

"She will be sleeping for a little while longer I'd say. Long enough for you to show me how badly you want Tony to not go to prison."

Peter has to catch his breath from his hot sobs. Knowing this was what he was terrified of all along. When it was going to progress further and worse for him.

He nods in resignation, and drops his jaw, letting his mouth hang open and closes his eyes.

Grant pushes forward immediately and Peter can't help but choke violently.

It's hot and heavy on his tongue, horrible and putrid. Peter focuses all his attention on not vomiting... not choking himself again.

"There you go, just like that" Grant sighs, jerking his hips slightly. "a natural born cocksucker" he laughs breathlessly.

Peter convinces his body to stay slack, hands in fists at his side.

Grant shoves in and out brutally, not leaving enough room for Peter to take more than a small panicked breath through his nose every few minutes.

"Stark taught you well, taking it so well" Grant moans, causing a sickening shiver to run through Peter's trembling body.

He can feel his head spinning, the overwhelm of the action, the lack of oxygen and the thrumming need to protect Tony feels like a drug.

Grant grips onto Peters hair now, shoving cruelly down Peters throat, and stopping. Peter gags around the intrusion, hot tears spilling down his cheeks. He waits for Grant to release him, but it doesn't seem like it's going to happen any time soon, Grant seeming content just holding him in place, if the moans and heavy breaths are anything to go by.

Peters hand fly up to Grants hip as he feels his lungs start to scream with the need to breathe. He tries to push, but he's so light headed and weak already, it makes no difference.

Grant pushes in further, gripping with a bruising force to Peters head.

Peter whines and coughs around the member sitting dangerously far down his throat.

He can feel the black spots dancing around his vision, his grip on Grants hips getting weaker with each second. Panic sits high in his chest, would Grant actually let him breathe?

His questions are answered when it's almost too late, Grant pulling out quickly, jerking himself in quick succession before releasing all over Peters gasping face.

Peter feels the hot thick liquid land on his cheek, eye, mouth and hair. Hot humiliated shame rushes through him as he frantically tries to regain his breath.

Grant uses the softening member to smear the mess more over Peters face, Peter too weak to even begin to stop the degrading act.

Grant chuckles as he admires his handy work. Peter sitting back on his legs, still kneeling, covered in release, crying softly, eyes closed and red with shame.

"I always did say you looked your best when you were on your knees" Grant mocks as he tucks himself back in. "Your precious Tony can sleep in his house another night. But if he crosses me and disrespects me again, I'll make sure he spends his life in a cell" he threatens with finality. Walking away and leaving Peter alone in the darkening room.

Despite wanting nothing more than to just sit where he was for the rest of his life, the drying substance on his face and the knowing that May was only meters away had him pulling himself off the floor and slinking into the bathroom to clean up.

As soon as he sees the toilet his body retches, he catches himself on the bowl just in time to bring up bile and strings of white that he doesn't want to think about.

Better out than in he thinks bitterly.

His phone is waiting for him on his bed when he gets to his room, filled with messages from Tony varying in time and days since it had been taken from him.

He skips over them all until he gets to the bottom, the most recent message only having come through minutes ago.

*TS: Pete, I hated that. Please tell me your safe and you and your aunt are okay. I can come back right now if you're not*

Peter closes his eyes to will away the tears prickling. He would never be safe here.

He types slowly considering each word carefully to subdue Tonys distress.

*PP: It's okay Tony, he was just upset from the hospital, May struggling and all... was already on edge when we got in. He apologised as soon as you left, and I convinced him that you meant no harm. Don't worry about us, we are all just about to have dinner together.*

He hits send, hating that almost every interaction with Tony was now full of lies and deception.

Tony doesn't reply, but Peter doesn't really feel like checking anyway.

He distantly remembers thinking about when he was too scared to sleep, but tonight he feels

exhausted. There was no point in trying to stay awake if Grant were to come in. If Grant wanted something, there was nothing Peter could do to prevent it anyway.

It wasn't like Peter would even try.

...

Peter spends the weekend tucked into his bedroom only coming out to see May and make sure she was okay every now and then. She spent most of the two days in her bed fatigued with the stress of her injuries, and Grant kept his distance thankfully from Peter.

Peter tried not to notice that May was colder to Grant now, and Grant was shooting her icy glares when she wasn't looking. But Peter was looking, and he didn't know whether to be terrified or grateful that May's rose-tinted glasses were starting to come off.

When Monday comes, Peter doesn't even register it's his birthday.

His phone had run out of battery on the Saturday night, and he hadn't bothered to recharge it, uninterested in anything it had to offer.

May comes into his room in the late morning, holding a plate of waffles balanced on a wrapped box.

Peter sits up with a smile, grinding his teeth at the pain that shoots through his ribs at the movement.

"Happy sweet 16 Pete!" She says cheerfully, placing a wet kiss to his head.

He grimaces but smiles warmly, taking the load off her hands and making room for her on the bed. She sits down gracefully, concealing her own wince with her injuries. Peter notices though. Guilt washing over him.

He unwraps the present delicately, muttering that she didn't have to get him anything, to which she scoffs at.

Inside the box reveals a small keychain, a sophisticated silver medallion with P.P written on the back. Peter admires the design and reaches forward to wrap May in a tight hug thanking her gratefully.

She laughs kindly, “You will need a nice key chain to go with these” she adds, tossing him another item. He doesn’t catch it, caught off guard as it drops into his lap.

He stares down, trying to make sense of what he was looking at. A car key?

He stares up at her with confusion. “Well you’re sixteen now, and I can’t have you only learning how to drive in my car” she smiles.

His jaw drops. Tears collecting in his eyes, he lunges forward a second time and wraps May even tighter in a hug. Babbling about how she didn’t need to do this, how thankful he was, and *she bought him a car?*

May laughs happily, “Well it was a bit of a joint effort between myself, Grant and Tony actually. I was going to give it to you tonight, but I didn’t really want to wait”

He buries his head in her shoulder, overcome with gratitude.

He feels so warm for the first time in a while, joy coursing through him.

“Now, it’s your day kiddo, you can do whatever you like, but we have dinner at 6pm okay? That’s the time I told Tony anyway.” She says, patting him on the cheek.

He freezes “Tony’s coming over for dinner?” he asks timidly.

“Of course he is, he wouldn’t miss it for the world” she smiles, not seeing how pale Peter had become in those mere seconds.

How would Grant behave if Tony was here again?

He quickly puts a smile back on his face thanking her again and promising to come out and work out their plans for the day after he cleaned up.

When he's alone he lets the panic attack flow through him. He was getting good at keeping them quiet now.

The day is spent with May and him trying out the new car, a simple Toyota model that Peter *loves*. They eat ice cream and walk around the park, Peter relishing in the fresh air and freedom. It's a perfect day.

By the time dinner comes, his nerves are back, sizzling hotter than ever, apprehensive at the thought of Grant and Tony being in the same room.

He's curled on the couch when the doorbell rings, and he hears May open it and greet Tony warmly. They chat as they make their way to the living room, Tony's eyes lighting up the moment they land on Peter.

"There's the old man!" he beams, making his way over to Peter and pulling him in for a hug. Peter melts into it, trepidation long forgotten now.

"How was your day kiddo! What do you think of your new wheels?" he says playfully, before adding "Bring it into the lab and we can swap out the engine for one of the old Audi ones" quietly. May spins arounds and delivers a *not a chance in hell* look that has Tony shrinking back and raising his hands in surrender.

"Fine no horsepower, how about a paint job- red and gold maybe?" he suggests, eyes warm and full of love, Peter's reflecting all the same.

"Yeah and next thing I know it will be a transformer and turn into the Hulkbuster or something" Peter laughs.

The room goes quiet as Grant walks in, he scowls when he sees Tony, but Tony puts his hand out to shake which Grant returns roughly.

Tony begins his rambling as they make their way to the table, hitting on May and throwing horrible Dad jokes around all in the same sentence. Peter feels at home. He wishes Grant weren't here and then everything would be perfect.

Grant stays silent for most of the meal, only offering nods and grunts, seemingly displeased at the world. Tony looks between him and Peter and rolls his eyes dramatically, causing a giggle to burst out of Peter's mouth.

Grant looks up and stares spitefully at the two, and Peter has to suppress the rest of the giggles as Tony kicks him under the table.

"Do you want your present now Peter" Grant says loudly over the conversation happening around him. Everyone stops speaking, staring at his announcement. May knits her brows in confusion, clearly not realising Grant had gotten Peter anything.

Peter swallows and nods politely, a forced smile on his lips.

"You didn't have to get me something Grant" he says quietly, staring at the envelope in Grant's hands.

"Yeah well, I did, so open it kid" he says roughly, crossing his arms over his chest and watching Peter closely.

Peter opens the envelope slowly, pulling out a brochure from inside. The brochure is of a lake in the mountains, he flips it over to see a lodge with smiling families littered around fire pits and activities.

Peter looks at Grant perplexed. Grant sees this and raises an eyebrow "It's a lodge up in the mountains about four hours out, I got us a room for the week, so we can go on a boy's trip. Gives me a chance to teach you a thing or two about fishing and camping and all that." He says nonchalantly. May smiles, but there's something Peter can't quite comprehend behind it. Peter is still dumbstruck, staring at the pamphlet in his hand.

"That's – uh – wow" he says finally. He's lost for words. Grant had planned a holiday for them? Why would he do that?

Images rush to Peters mind of being stuck alone with Grant in the middle of nowhere for a week and he feels his stomach crawl. He looks at the lodge again and sees all the people, why would Grant take him some place they were going to be surrounded by people for?

“Thank you” he stutters, fear and anxiety swirling around him.

Grant smiles pleased, “Yeah we leave the end of the week” Peter freezes and stares at him, alarm fizzling through his skin.

Tony is staring at the altercation, eyebrows pinched together.

“Oh wow, I don’t- I don’t know what to say, thank you” he mumbles, reaching over to give an awkward hug, just for show.

The conversation resumes awkwardly, Tony and May shooting Peter and Grant suspecting glances.

Peter excuses himself after a moment and moves to the bathroom, shutting it gently behind himself. He can hear the sounds of plates being picked up and murmurs of conversations. His head still reeling from the unsuspected gift.

He watches the door handle turn slowly, and suddenly Grant is slipping into the bathroom too. He grabs Peters wrist and pins him against the door, hand slapping against Peters mouth roughly.

Peter goes limp, letting Grant do as he pleases so they don’t make a scene. “Hate the way he looks at me. Fucker sits at my table like he owns it” Grant is hissing, using his free hand that’s not pressed against Peters mouth to undo his pants.

Peter stares up at the ceiling, his own hand reaching forward to wrap around Grant, the familiar coil of shame embracing him. He begins his ministrations, not daring to look at what he was doing.

Grants still whispering profanities into his ear, and Peter tunes him out expertly. Instead he adjusts his hearing into the room over, where May and Tony are still in the kitchen together.



“I know, Tony, I’ve noticed it too. I think Grants drinking freaks Peter out, given what he has seen out there. I don’t know how to fix Grants problem” May is whispering.

“Are you thinking of leaving him?” Tony questions back.

May pauses and Peter holds his breath.

“Maybe? I don’t know. I just want him to show me that he’s getting his act together. I told him he needed to take better care of Peter, and he’s bought this trip all on his own, so I think that’s progress? I’m not even sure anymore” she says, tired.

“Well give Peter the opportunity to say no. He told me he doesn’t feel comfortable around Grant all the time, this might be too much for him” Tony says back, softly.

Peters hand is moving faster now, Grants moans slip back into his hearing and he quickly channels them out.

“He said that? I just don’t know Tony, it just feels so sudden that everything has changed. I don’t want Peter feeling like he’s losing another male role model in his life”

Tony hums. “I think we both know Peter’s big enough to make his mind up about who he wants in his life or not. I don’t like Grant and I think you know that, but I’ll support you in whatever you both decide. And if you need a place to stay, you know I’ve got plenty of room for you both at the tower”

Peter stops listening after that, Grant spilling over his hand.

“You better tell them both how excited you are for this trip or I’ll be taking the other kids with me instead, you understand?”

Peter nods wearily, moving over for Grant to slide back out the door inconspicuously. He washes his hands twice over with soap and splashes the cold water on his face to cool his burning cheeks.

May and Tony were both becoming wary of Grant, and what would that mean for him?

He steps out of the bathroom, almost colliding with Tony who steadies him gently. “Woah kid, I was just looking for you actually” he smiles, spinning Peter around and walking them both to Peter’s room. Peter hides his flinch as Tony’s hand touches his own. Peter feels as though he is dirty and hates the idea of passing that to Tony.

They sit on the bed, shoulder to shoulder. Tony pulls a small box from inside his jacket and places it in Peter’s hand.

“What? You think I wouldn’t get you anything?” Tony smirks.

“I thought – the car?” Peter splutters, already opening the wrapping.

“Yeah but I wanted to get you a Ferrari and your aunt said no, so I wanted to give you something else” he chuckles. Peter believes him about the Ferrari.

Inside the box is a watch. It’s beautiful and sleek, sophisticated and simple at the same time.

Peter pulls it out delicately and turns it over in his palm. Etched onto the back is a small spider, the same as the one on his suit (which is collecting dust at the back of the closet).

“Tony!” he exclaims, quickly twisting it to put it on his wrist. Tony helps him with the buckle, admiring his handiwork alongside Peter.

“I didn’t know what brand you would like so I just made one myself. More fun that way. Got to put in a few things of my own” Tony smiles proudly.

Peter’s excitement increases tenfold. The incident in the bathroom minutes ago forgotten.

“Well actually only one real thing. It’s actually just a watch. I know you have all the gadgets already in the suit, so I wanted to do something simple that you could have all time. But to ease with my very fragile heart, I put a panic button in it” He turns the watch to the side to show the button that he is referring to.

“You just hold that bad boy down for five seconds, and it will immediately send me your coordinates, and I’ll come and get you... I figured you might not always be in the suit, and you don’t like me always helicoptering, so this is my perfect in-between. I won’t be able to track you or monitor you unless you hit that button... unfortunately. Hopefully you will always have your phone and call me if you need me but just in case you don’t have that...” He’s rambling like he does when he wants to downplay his emotions.

Peter wraps him in a tight hug to shut him up.

“I love it” he whispers. “It’s perfect, thank you”

Tony smiles and hugs back, both content with each other company.

They eventually part and re-join May and Grant for cake and tea. Tony leaves with a warm goodbye, tapping Peter’s wrist subtly “Always here” he murmurs. Peter nods and smiles back, closing the door and wishing the two remaining goodnight, thanking them both for his day and gifts.

He climbs into bed, cradling the watch to his chest like a security blanket. Knowing Tony had made it for him with his own safety in mind meant more to Peter than he could ever communicate. He wishes he was brave enough to push the button, brave like Tony.

But he knew he wasn’t.

He contemplated Grant’s present again. He had no doubt in his mind that this was a set up for something much worse... Grant having the luxury of May and Tony being out of range, and Peter trapped alone with him for the entirety of the week.

Ideas flash in Peter’s mind of Grant using the opportunity to finally kill Peter once and for all, like he had promised to do all those nights ago.

When the prickle of apprehension comes, it’s not in fear Peter realises, it’s in acceptance. He knew this time would come eventually. He’s happy it won’t be where May will find him, hopefully far enough away that Grant will flee once it’s over.

Peter’s not afraid. He’s ready now.

## Chapter End Notes

Please let me know what you think! This is the final chap before the climax. The next few chaps will be very intense and climactic, with lots of hurt no comfort!

Next one should be up in about 4-5 days

Come chat on [ironwebbs.tumblr.com](http://ironwebbs.tumblr.com)

Thanks!!

## Chapter 7

### Chapter Notes

Here is the first part of the climax of the story.

Please mind the graphic depictions of violence and rape/non-con tags for this chapter. As expected it is extremely graphic, so please do not read if this will be triggering for you.

Enjoy the 8k, next chapter will be in about 2 weeks!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

May is staring at him again. She's been doing that a lot lately, Peter thinks. He resists the urge to squirm and keeps his eyes trained down at his phone, scrolling through some lame article. He decidedly doesn't meet her eye, not wanting to commence the conversation he knew she was wanting to have eventually.

"Peter..." she says gently. Obviously giving up her attempt at getting him to talk first.

He sighs and shuts his phone, staring at the black mirror for a moment, watching his own deflated, tired face stare back.

He looks away from the phone, pulling his knees up to his chest and resting his chin on them, giving May his attention so she can begin her questioning.

"You don't have to go on this trip if you don't want to. No one is forcing you okay? Tony mentioned some things that you had told him, and I don't want you to go if you are going to be miserable" she says softly, aware that Grant was only a few rooms away. "I can make up an excuse for you, so you don't feel like you're hurting his feelings..." she continues, "or I could just go with him instead, I don't mind"

Peter wants to squeeze his eyes shut to stop seeing her pitying face. He knew he had to go on this trip to avoid Grants wrath. Although, that was in vain, he knew either way he would be the focus of the wrath and anger, be it in a lodge miles away, or in this very apartment if he messed with Grants scheme.

"May, I want to go... it's okay. I don't know what Tony has said to you, but I'm fine, seriously. Don't stress" he says with a forced smile. She studies him for a moment before clicking her tongue.

“Okay, but if you change your mind for *any* reason, you tell me. No questions asked, I’ll cover for you” she says eventually. Still studying him for any sign of discontent. Peter holds her gaze and keeps the smile plastered onto his face.

He nods and unwraps his arms from their death grip around his legs, he unfolds the legs too, and shuffles over to place his head on her shoulder and hold her hand, still wary of her healing injuries. “You don’t have to always try protect me May, I can look after myself” he whispers.

She presses her lips to his head, “It’s my job to protect you kiddo, you just need to let me do that job and *talk* to me.”

Peter grimaces, he wished it didn’t have to be like this, May would be destroyed when she found out she couldn’t protect him. But she would recover eventually. He would rather her spend years trying to get over him, as opposed to her being dead because of him.

She would move on eventually... she did with Ben over time, and Tony would be there with her this time instead of Peter. Tony was much better at comforting than Peter could be.

“You know he and I haven’t been really getting on as well as we used to” she begins cautiously. “Would you be upset if it was just the two of us again?” she finishes. Peter can feel her tremor slightly and her heart rate increase.

He thinks about his words carefully. He knew she would feel more guilty if she hadn’t ended the relationship sooner if he doesn’t make it back from this trip, but he also thinks about Grant not coming back after the trip either, and she would be more safe if he doesn’t get the opportunity to hurt her before they leave in 2 days.

“Whatever makes you happy May, I think you should try work it out though... don’t stop being together just because of me. I know you have noticed him being a bit colder to me, but that’s just because of what I said that night... when I was drunk.” He says quietly, hating each lie. “we are working through that... this trip will be good for us.”

He doesn’t want her to ever know he had suffered for so long. Grant will likely pose everything as an accident, or worse case, they *will* come back and Peter will just endure the pain for a while longer.

The answer seems to work its charm on May, and they settle into the couch in a contented silence.

At least *May* was contented, Peter on the other hand was still jumping from conclusion to conclusion of what the next week of his life would be like.

At some point during his contemplation, an idea penetrates his mind. *Why couldn't he just kill Grant?*

It would be easy enough with his strength... He could even do it with the suit on to help him control his emotions if Grant didn't know who his attacker was.

He expels the idea immediately. He couldn't kill anyone. He could never go through with it. Not to mention, he was practically in the same state he was pre-bite, with his weakened strength and injured body.

But the idea kept presenting itself though the day. Ways he could do it to make it look like an accident. Ways he could do it without causing Grant any pain... *but he wanted Grant to hurt*. His mind bounced between hating itself for thinking that way, and an inky darkness wanting to end this suffering once and for all.

Could he actually do it? Grant had taken everything from him, his family, his freedom, his innocence. Could he take Grant's life in return?

He knew he couldn't.

As he lay in bed, tossing and turning with distress, he thinks more about what was going to happen once they were alone.

Would Grant finally go through with what he had been leading to all this time, and finally force Peter to go all the way... or would he just kill him immediately?

Peter had seen Grant begin to escalate the more he noticed May becoming distant, and the more he realised Tony was becoming suspicious. Peter knew just as well as Grant that there was a timer suddenly on this *game*... and there was only a matter of time before it all came crashing down.

Caught up in his own mind, Peter didn't even realise his door had been opened and closed, a figure now looming over his bed.

Peter jumps and almost shrieks in fright, but there's a meaty hand pressing harshly on his mouth, his jaw aching in protest.

Grants face materialises in front of him leaning close enough for Peter to make out his features in the darkness of the room. He tears the duvet off Peters body leaving Peter bare to the nights chill.

Peter begins to violently tremble, Grant never having attacked in Peters room before. Grant is clambering into the bed, straddling Peter and hovering above him, hand still pressed tightly, inches away from completely cutting Peters airflow off.

Peters breath is choked nonetheless, terrified of the drunken heavy figure on top of him.

The air is stale already from Grant's breath, waves of alcohol so thick Peter feels as though he can taste it just from inhaling. His mind is dizzying, *Grant was in his bed*, his only safe place left.

Grants strong hand grips Peters shoulder and flips him effortlessly, forcing Peters head into the pillow with a solid hand to the back of his neck, and straddling the backs of Peters thighs now.

Peter scrambles, trying to dislodge the hand from the back of his head, air hot and restrictive where he's pressed into the cotton. His shouts of fear trapped behind his teeth.

Grants hands tear at the top of Peters pyjama pants, roughly pulling them down until they sit midway down his thighs. Peter worms and whines, hands flying back to free Grants punishing hold. Ice cold terror rushing through him. *This was it*. Grant *wasn't* going to wait until the end of the week when they were alone in the woods. He was obviously done with waiting.

Tears are mixing in with the snot and drool on Peters pillow, his shoulders shaking with each terrified breath.

Grants hands are pulling Peters boxers down too now, nails scraping on the skin of Peters back, leaving hot, red, angry lines. Cold air hits Peters backside, and a shattering realisation of his fate sinks in with a powerful shiver.

It was all happening so fast.



Grant pauses for a moment, and Peter feels horribly exposed. Hands caressing his pale skin, squeezing and pulling.

Peters sobs are muted by the pillow, he shakes his head and grips the sheets in his fists.

He feels as Grant adjusts to pull his own pants down, the sick slick of skin on skin as Grant presumably strokes himself.

“Look at you” Grant whispers. It feels so loud in this quiet room.

“All laid out for me. Ready to take me” more of moan now.

Peter shivers as if he were frozen, but his body is hot with humiliation and dread. Grants hand presses harder on his head into the pillow, his breaths becoming harder to grasp. Suddenly Peter feels the blunt head of something hot press against his backside, leaving a wet streak in its wake.

It only takes him a moment to realise what it is before he redoubles his squirming.

“Hold still you little shit” Grant hisses, pressing impossibly harder. Peter thinks he might pass out soon.

The heated organ presses harder into Peter until it slips between his clenched cheeks and sits threateningly at his opening.

He’s not squirming anymore. He’s paralysed with fear. Stiff as a piece of wood.

Its pressing and moving on him, but never breeches.

Grant is huffing and moaning into Peters ear. “God I can’t wait to feel you. Tight as a virgin, hot as a whore” he groans, shifting his hips and sliding against Peter.

Peter is still frozen, not daring to even twitch a muscle.

“Can’t wait until I get to be inside. Want it to be special. Just you and me in the cabin” breath hitching as he nears his release. The bed squeaking and groaning under their weight.

“Soon, Peter, so soon” he says breathlessly, a few more rushed jerks of his hand and then he is spilling over Peters backside and quivering hole.

Peters shoulders sag in relief and devastation. His heart beating wildly in his chest at what could have been and what *will* be. He can feel the sickening slide of Grants semen on him, falling and gathering into his skins creases.

Grant catches his breath, finally releasing his hands from Peters hair. Peter takes gulps of fresh air once he does, still not daring to move too much while Grant was still pressed so close.

Finally, Grant moves away, standing once more over Peters head, staring down in the blackness of the room. Peter can hardly make out more than a shadow.

“If you tell her you’re not coming, I’ll fuck you in front of her and then slit her throat” he says coldly.

Peter stares in horror, hot tears slipping down his cheeks and soaking the pillow further.

“Do you understand me?” He says, more harshly.

“I understand” Peter croaks, voice weak and breaking with each word. Grant, satisfied, leaves the room, his stench and presence still lingering behind.

Peter sobs violently, muffling his howls of terror in his sodden pillow. He can still feel the cool breeze on his skin where his pants have been pulled down, drying and caking fluid uncomfortable on his sensitive skin.

Peter doesn’t care enough to clean it though, too consumed with grief and loss. He simply reaches back blindly to pull the pants and underwear back up, not bothering with the quilt.

The cold helps him to stay awake the rest of the night.

...

Through the night Peter had accumulated a plan. He needed to know that if Grant made Peters death look like an accident, that he would still be locked away. Unable to hurt another kid like he had hurt Peter. Unable to hurt May.

If Peter could do one final good deed, it would be this.

He kept his door locked and ears on high alert for the remainder of the day, listening for any hint that someone would come into his room.

He started with bagging up clothing he had hid away under his bed, clothes soiled in his blood from Grants abuse, ranging from hoodies to trousers. He shoved it all into an old shopping bag he had found in his room. He then found the shirts with the still crusted white substance on them, from when he was too scared to put them into the washing basket. He gathers them up too, along with his underwear from the previous night.

He stares at the bulging bag, full of some of his favourite items of clothing, now tainted black with shame.

He pulls out his phone, plugging it into his computer and downloading across his photos. He had in the past begun to document his worst injuries, saving them under a locked app on his phone, back when he was always contemplating turning Grant in. Even after that it had just become habitual. He took photos of his bruises and cuts, scratches and burns, each captioned with the origin of the injury. He uploads all the photos he has onto a flash drive, titling the album FOR TONY before ejecting it and adding it to the bag.

He grabs a sharpie from his desk and scribbles "EVIDENCE" onto the outside, before shoving it to the back of his cupboard.

Next, he finds a note pad and sits down, his hands shaking as he begins to write. He knows he doesn't have much time left.

*Tony.*

*If you are reading this, I assume I'm already gone. I am so sorry for the hurt this will cause you and May, but please find it in your heart to forgive me and help me now.*

*Grant has done this. Even if he tells you otherwise, it was him.*

*I knew this day would come a long time ago but know that I am ready for it now. I wouldn't have been scared or afraid. I know I will be brave until the end, just like you taught me.*

*Inside the bag is everything you need to put him away. Please don't ever let him out Tony. Don't ever let him hurt another child again. It's the only thing you can do for me now.*

*I know you will blame yourself, I know you will think this is your fault somehow. It's not and it won't ever be. I didn't want anyone else to get hurt so I kept it to myself all these months. You were the thought that helped me survive each day and I couldn't be more grateful to you.*

*I know you will never understand why I did what I did, hiding this from you, and walking to my own grave. Maybe someday you will.*

*You are the greatest gift life has ever given me. I do not mourn the loss of my life knowing that I spent each moment following in your footsteps, getting to grow our relationship. You will always be my mentor, the closest thing I have to a dad. I wish we could have spent more time together, but I guess life just works in mysterious ways.*

*Please do not ever let May find out what Grant has done to me. She never needs to know. Find a way to keep her away from this all, let her believe in the accident that he tells her. Find a way for her to mourn for only me and to never blame herself. She couldn't have stopped this Tony, please do not resent her. Protect her for me.*

*I love you Tony. I'm sorry.*

*Peter.*

He doesn't realise he has begun to cry until he sees the smudges of his tears causing some words to run.

He buries his face in his hands silencing his sobs. How could a child accept their death and write their goodbyes? He hadn't even lived yet, and here he was talking as though he was already dead.

But he knew he had to do this. He had to make sure Tony took care of it after he couldn't.

He folds the note up and places it on the bag. The corner of his eyes catches a glimmer of red. He looks at the crumbled suit, stuffed into the back of the wardrobe, forgotten.

He pulls it out with shaky hands, lifting it up to stare at the emblem in the middle. His wrist itches from the same mark imbedded behind his watch.

He doesn't know why he does it, but he pulls the suit on. The heart-warmingly familiar press of the material on his skin, adjusting a second longer to his no longer toned body, now only skin and bone.

His eyes come to life, blue lights of numbers and codes flashing around him in the mask. He can feel himself still crying. Weeping at the beauty. Weeping at the loss.

He writes a quick text to May '*gone out SM, back before dinner*' he sends, hoping she doesn't mind too much.

As soon as he leaps from his building, the pull of the webbing letting him fly up to the sky, his worries and fears disappear.

He's free up here.

He swings through the city, laughter bubbling out of his chest as he breezes through the skyline, enjoying the views and the euphoria.

He flies past the bodega, reminiscing on the memories of the shop, the terror of hurting Mr Dalmar and his beloved cat. He continues on, remembering each petty crime he had stopped in each ally or carpark or rooftop. Each criminal he had wrapped up for the police and each civilian he had helped to safety.

He doesn't look for crime tonight though. Tonight, he just wants to feel the air rushing past him for the last time.

He feels on top of the world. Like no one, not even Grant, could touch him up here in the sky.

He doesn't realise how long he had swung until he sits on the ledge of a building catching his breath and staring at the darkening city around him.

A loud clank of boots rattle behind him, the accompanying wirr and hiss of metal enough to identify the approaching person, so Peter just keeps his eyes forward, enjoying the views.

Tony ejects from the suit, taking a hesitant seat on the ledge next to Peter.

"Do we need to sit so close to the edge kid? I rather not be scrapped off the pavement tonight" he says breathlessly, Peter can detect the underlying panic in his words.

It makes him smile, for real this time. "I'd catch you" he offers, eyes twinkling in the nights light.

"Don't doubt it" Tony shoots back, settling into the silence and taking in the landscape.

"It's been a while since you went out. How do you feel?" Tony asks after a long contented silence.

Peter hums airily, still on a high from his nights activities. "Amazing" he says quietly.

Tony smiles again, watching Peters relaxed face.

"Never gets old, does it?" Tony sighs, looking up into the faded stars in the sky, subdued by the cities competing light. He felt like the stars next to the world. Faded by its power and possibility.

Peter tilts his head gently until it rests on Tony's shoulder, Tony's arm immediately coming up in response to wrap around Peters back and pull him closer under his arm.

“Never” Peter whispers.

“I’m going to miss you” Peter admits after another stretched silence. The contents of what sits at the back of his closet weighing on his brain heavily. He dispels the emotion and inhales Tony’s warmth instead.

“You’re only going for a week kid. If you want me to come get you earlier though...” Tony starts, that usual trepidation in his voice.

Peter smiles softly “I know. Thank you for always looking out for me” he says quietly. Tony having to strain to hear his voice over the whipping air.

“Always kid. Always” Tony responds, resting his own head on Peters, letting the serenity calm his body.

They sit there for long enough for the chill to set in, the night sky black.

“Want me to fly with you back home?” Tony says, pulling himself away from Peter regretfully.

“Nah, I got it” Peter smiles again sadly. He can see Tony face creasing in concern at his tone.

“Just missed it, wish I went out more” he amends, and Tony nods knowingly. He pulls Tony into a hug, noting every detail to memory for the final time. Tony’s smell, his hands tight on his back, his heart beat gentle bellow where the reactor used to lay.

Tony hugs tighter, sensing Peters need for comfort in the moment. Peter appreciates it more than Tony will ever know.

When they depart, Peter feels the hole of sadness and despair start to open up inside him. He jumps off the ledge before he can think about it too much.

...

In the morning when Grant is taking his bags down to the car, he hugs May tightly, burring his face into her neck and swallowing back his tears. He lets her presence overwhelm him, trying to hold on to everything she has to offer.

She hugs tightly too “Just a week, but I’ll miss you so much. Call whenever you can” she murmurs into his hair.

“Love you May, Love you so much” he says wetly, his emotions rising to the surface. He didn’t want to go. He wasn’t ready.

“Times up for goodbyes Pete, if we want to beat the traffic we need to leave now” Grants gruff voice sounds from the doorway.

Peter wipes his eyes furiously, trying to hide the tear stains on his cheeks. May smiles at him sympathetically, pressing a kiss to his forehead. “See you in a week baby” she says, just as wet.

He nods and moves out the door, throwing a glance back at her waving just before he rounds the corner. He can hear her and Grant saying their goodbyes as he waits in the hallway.

“Why are you both so upset, it’s only a week” Grant says amused. “He’s never been away before for this long. You know how close we are” she says back annoyed with a hint of sadness. “Look after him okay, don’t be too hard on him” she chides. He doesn’t listen to the rest and continues down the stairwell to the awaiting car.

Grant climbs into the car, starting the engine and skidding away from the curb.

They drive in silence until they are out of the city, well on their way to their destination out of town.

“There’s an esky bag in the back seat” Grant says suddenly causing Peter to jump in fright at the broken silence. “Grab it will you?”

Peter moves to comply, reaching back and grasping the bag to pull it onto his lap.



“There’s a bottle of water in there. Drink it all” he says coarsely, eyes never leaving the road.

Peter stares at the bottle of water with anticipation. No doubt in his mind the water was drugged, seeing as Grant had no interest in his hydration levels. He didn’t see the point in being drugged for the ride though... he already knew where they were going, he had googled it numerous times already.

Grant shot him a look, and Peter shrunk back, shaking hands removing the lid before hesitantly bringing the bottle to his lips.

He closed his eyes, trying to squash the overriding panic at being helpless again and a victim to the drug’s effects. The water slides thickly down his throat, a tangy taste remaining on his tongue.

The bottle is empty in a minute, given Peters actual dehydration.

He waits for the effects, the spinning world and the underwater sounds.

Instead he just falls into the blackness.

...

Peter comes to, groggily, sun shining bright in his eyes, bouncing between bright and dark.

He tries to wake up further, clouded mind and muddled sight disorientating. His body is starting to slowly return to him. He can feel a sharp pressure in his stomach... and then he can feel a painful grip around the backs of his thighs.

More jostling moves later he realises he’s upside down, watching the backs of legs below him, walking who knows where.

He takes deep breaths to steady his mind, truly take in his surroundings.

It only takes a few moments to realise he’s over Grants shoulder, being carried like prized game.

Peter can't shake the aftershocks of the drug still coursing through him, his senses fighting to come back online.

His eyes focus in and out on the leaves and rocks and dirt they walk over. His ears come up from underwater for short seconds to the sound of crunching footsteps and heavy breathing.

His body feels each step as it rocks his limp form.

Giving up entirely on the overwhelming sights sounds and feelings, he shuts his eyes, biting back the nausea between his teeth.

They walk for long enough that Peter drifts back into unconsciousness twice, only to be drowsily woken each time as the path they were taking became uneven and jostled his numb body further.

He doesn't even realise they have reached their destination, too out of it to understand why the blaring sun is gone and he's hitting a hard floor definitely not made of sticks and rocks.

Peter groans from the impact, rolling away and curling around himself protectively.

Grant seems happy to leave Peter's crumpled body in the corner, as he bustles around the space, only a shadow, becoming increasingly familiar the longer Peter stares.

It feels like it takes hours before the dimming lights plateau, and he doesn't feel the gnawing illness in his bones. He pushes himself up to his elbows, next, to his hands, bringing his knees under with all the strength he can manage.

Grant is seemingly not paying him any mind as he pulls himself awkwardly to stand, swaying with the effort. He holds onto the cold damp walls of what looks to be some kind of cabin... more like a shack in its size and filth. Peter tries to gain a sense of how long he was passed out for, how long they had driven before they had come here, how long they had walked on foot rather than continue on the road.

Was this a pit stop before they made it to the lodge?

He supported himself on the windowsill to eye Grant wearily. Grant who was shoving cans and packets into the cupboards, throwing duffle bags on to the worn-out dusty couches and rustling around in the drawers.

The cabin wasn't much, only a 'living' area, wreaking of death and decay and moist wood. The area held a small kitchenette, two beaten sofas and a broken table. Peter clocked the two doors, probably a bathroom and a bedroom. But they were both closed.

Peter turned his body slightly to stare out the window, only seeing trees and shrubbery for as far as his eyes could go. A horrible sinking feeling was crawling through his veins.

*This* was the final destination.

Grant was never taking him to a populated lodge. He had planned this out meticulously.

Here they were alone, no one in sight for miles. The road so far away. Help even further.

Peter dropped his chin to his chest in despair. How could he feel so empty yet so full of fear at the same time?

"Figured it out quickly champ" Grant's condescending voice rings out from where he's leaned against the makeshift kitchen.

Peter sucks in a breath, still trembling with anticipation and hurt. Why had he thought he could handle this? Why couldn't he have just screamed for help when someone was actually close enough to hear him?

Overcome with a rearing childlike terror, Peter makes a split decision despite his weakened state. He bolts for the door.

He barley makes it to the handle before his head is being slammed into the wood, creaking and splintering painfully.

Grant flips him around to face his enemy head on, the punch sending him sailing down to the side.

The next punch so raged it knocks his head back into the floor beneath. Peters head, already swimming from the drugs and the terror, sinks even further into a pained unbearable state. He brings his hands up in defence, trying to slow down the hits raining down on his face.

“You think I’d let you get away that easy?” Grant laughs, his punches going lower, Peter wheezing as his ribs are hit with incredible force.

“I can do this all day Peter, and no one can stop me here. You can scream as loud as you can” he hisses, a manic smile on his face.

Peter whimpers pathetically, scrambling on the filthy floor to twist his body over, army crawling away from Grants hysteric laughter.

He doesn’t make it anywhere. Grants body crushing down on his back, ribs and broken body shrieking in protest. His head is slammed repeatedly into the floor, blood begin to make its decent down and into Peters eyes.

The searing agony almost forces the screams out of his lips involuntarily. He refuses to give in so easily without a fight this time. A fight he knew he wasn’t going to win but needed to at least try.

It was becoming harder to keep his eyes open, but he is more desperate to stay awake, terrified of what Grant would do to him if he were unconscious again.

“I was going to make you wait, but I think *I’ve* waited long enough” Grant whispers, close enough to Peters ear he can feel the moist breath.

The horrible hands are at his waist again, pulling and tearing, soon enough leaving Peter bare, his pants tangled around his ankles, trapping his legs like a wild animal.

Peter feels like a wild animal.

He flops and squirms, claws the ground to find the grip to pull himself away from the hands parting and opening him. A loud whine rips its way from his throat, the room becoming more blurred from the tears and blood coursing through his eyes.

“Wait! Please Grant, No, wait” he begs, pleads, prays.

Grant was never one to actually listen.

There are fingers first, they shove in without any warning or finesse. Peter groans loud in his throat, clenching his teeth so hard together he can hear them creek under the pressure. His nails are breaking horribly as he buries them into the wood, dragging himself pitifully away from the stretching burn of fingers, probing his last bout of innocence.

“Grant no, please, I don’t, I can’t” he’s babbling, spittle and blood in his mouth, the words are slurred from his terror and injuries. He doesn’t give up the struggling.

Feeling ever so like a puppet, Grant holds him in place, stops him from moving any further than right where he was wanted.

Peter can horrifyingly count two, three fingers, nails scrapping and pulling. He doesn’t think he missed Grant pouring any liquid to ease the burn, so the sick realisation that the slick between his legs was the small rivers of blood already streaking and gathering has his mouth filling with bile.

The fingers are gone, and Peters fuzzed head loses track of time. He doesn’t know how long it takes for Grant to pull himself out, to line himself up, to grip onto Peters hair for purchase, causing Peters back to bow.

“Scream for me Peter. I want to hear your pretty scream” Grant hisses, before driving forward brutally.

The sound that Peter lets out isn’t quite a scream as much as it is a gurgled groan. Breath pushed out of his lungs so fast Peter feels as though he could never possibly manage to breathe again.

The pain hits all at once.

Splitting, horrible, disgracing pain.

Peter’s whining and keening, groaning and sobbing.

It's overwhelming, the hurt he experiences, his legs tremble, his backside alight, his hands claw the floorboards uselessly.

"So... *uh* ... worth the wait... so tight" Grant's groaning, Peter hasn't got any room left for humiliation. Only pain and distress. His world crumbling around him with every snap of hips.

He can feel the blood leak out of him, thick and hot on his thighs.

"Please, - get it... get it- out, Grant I can't- I can't *I can't*" Peter sobs, his voice catching and cracking, hiccupping with agony and strain.

"I want to hear you scream Peter" Grant moans, hands tightening their grip on Peters hair as he pumps his hips faster.

Peter can't even conjure up enough air to even begin to scream, despite the voice in his head shrieking.

Grant shifts his hips slightly, the pain washes through Peter sickeningly, a new agonizing stab of horror.

Peter finds it in himself to scream.

And scream.

*And scream.*

...

Peter watches through half closed eyes from his spot sprawled on the floor as Grant dresses without any sense of urgency. Peter can make out the smears of blood on Grants skin and crotch, *his blood* Peter thinks.

He rests his burning cheek against the cold floor, still panting softly, fingers gripping and releasing on the splintered wood underneath him. Nails bloody and broken from the futile attempts of clawing away from the unfathomable pain.

His pants were still tangled around his ankles, leaving him naked from the waist down. Peter could feel the drying body fluid on the backs of his thighs, hot and cold all at once, dripping and sticking. Nausea simmered dangerously in his stomach, threatening to come out any moment.

Peter was going into shock.

It was so different to a panic attack. This left him paralysed, disassociated, cold.

His heart was pounding in his chest, synchronising with the throb of his backside.

It was almost like his whole body was numb and simultaneously in a meat grinder, pain washing in and out like waves on the shore. Which, sticking to that analogy, Peter felt like he was floating in them.

Coming up and down from consciousness. Holding on barely by a thread of his sanity. Overcome with fear of falling asleep, but dreading being awake every second that he was.

Grant had walked to bathroom, the sound of running water in the sink loud in the quiet of Peters panic. Panic was good though. Panic was better than paralysis.

Peter's eyes locked on to the front door. So close, yet so impossibly far.

But he couldn't stay here. He couldn't do *that* again. Ever.

This wasn't about enduring, this was life or death now. Peter wouldn't survive another round. He knew that for sure.

Using his elbows, he pulled his body an inch further, whimpering and softly sobbing at the

renewed agony each twitch of his muscles brought down on him.

Each time his elbows, and when that was too hard just his flat palms on the wood, pulled his body forward, whines and cries wretched out of his mouth. He tried to keep them in, gritting his teeth and muffling the pained moans into the crook of his elbow, he tried to keep quiet.

Clearly Peter wasn't as quiet as he wanted to be, his fingertips just brushing the door in an excruciating stretch when a boot comes down on them, slamming and crushing them into the ground.

Peter does shout now, unabashed and piercing, feeling as his bones grind together under the weight.

Grant is laughing chillingly, he says something that Peter doesn't catch, too preoccupied with trying to pry his crushed fingers from under the shoe.

In pain and distraught, the hand in his hair doesn't even register, nor does the fact he's being dragged by it. He's withering and sobbing loudly at the torture, blind in panic.

The cold hard floor is replaced with a cushioned surface, a mattress of some-sort, uncomfortable and scratchy, stiff and pungent all the same. Peter's flailing, kicking his arms and legs out, trying his best to protect himself from this again. He wouldn't. He *couldn't*.

Hands are pulling at the twisted garment at his legs, freeing them momentarily before a heavy weight sits on top of them. The hands move his shirt, and Peter cries out in frustration, fighting tooth and nail despite his mind-altering pain.

The shirt is gone, ripped over his head crassly. Peter has only a second to feel the flush of humiliated exposure, trying fruitlessly to cover his naked skin. Shivering at the hungry look Grant was possessing as he scanned over Peters expanse.

Hands grab at Peters wrists where they shield his body, tearing them up above his head and flat on the dirty mattress. Peter flails some more, trying to kick up his legs to dislodge Grants solid mass.

He's out of breath and defeated soon enough. Slumping in defeat and watching Grant with barely repressed terror and hatred. Grants huffing too at the strain to keep Peter contained, *like an animal* Peter thinks again.



He's reaching behind Peters head with the hand that's not holding Peters arms together, and suddenly there's cold metal encompassing Peters bony wrists, a chain rattling confirms Peters fears.

He was handcuffed to bed frame.

Grant sits back on Peters thighs, smiling at his handiwork. Peter stretched out below him.

Peter hasn't got any energy to fight anymore. His head drops miserably back onto the mattress, not even a pillow to comfort his screaming head. He groans as Grant presses forward over his torso, ribs howling in protest.

There's more pressure at his wrists now, Grant studying something that Peter can't crane his neck to see.

There an abrupt movement, and suddenly the weight on his left wrist is gone. For a moment Peter thinks it's the handcuffs, confused at the rapid change. But instead Grant has resumed his place on Peters bare thighs, this time holding a watch. *Peters watch.*

Peter lets out a pitiful sob, his final protection and security ripped away from him like everything else.

"Your precious Tony give this to you?" Grant smirks, dangling the accessory in front of Peters devastated face.

He doesn't wait for an answer, only throws it uncaringly across the room, Peter watching as it hits the wall and clatters down onto the floor.

He keeps his eyes trained on it even as Grant shifts back slightly, parting Peters thighs roughly, exposing him further.

The tears stream out of his eyes, his fate sealed and terrifying to the core.

Cold waves of despair roll through his stomach, clenching and shuddering with every stroke of hand and every press of fingers.

He groans and chokes on a sob as Grant enters him for the second time, no less painful than the first.

Its more intimate this time, Grant not shoving his head into the floor and rutting like a frenzied animal with his prey.

This time is worse. Grants face looming over Peters, thrusting hard yet slow.

“Look at you. Taking me all in. Can you feel me Peter? Feel me so deep inside?” His words are breathless and bone chilling.

Peter turns his head, searching desperately for the watch on the floor, swallowing the excruciating pained whimpers bursting out of his lips.

Grant bites his neck, licks over the wounds, licks up his chin in a show of eroticism.

Peter whines and presses his face further away, fighting against his bonds.

There’s a heavy hand pressing on his stomach, pressing down sickeningly until he feels the corresponding pressure behind meet with the front, a quick look down and he sees his stomach protruding.

“I can feel myself inside of you” Grant says, almost in awe, his thrusts picking up in speed, the bed creaking and groaning under the changed pace.

He can’t hold it in anymore, the vomit spills out of his mouth, falling beside his head, pooling in his already matted hair. The heated liquid seeps into his cheek, and his stomach jolts in an attempt to expel more.

There’s a wetness inside him now too. He feels it.

Grants head thrown back and moaning unashamed into the dusty air.

Peter vomits again.

...

Peter can hear Grant on the phone outside the door, he realised after a few shared sentences that it's May.

He feels the misery swallow him up. He wanted her to save him, to bundle him up and tell him everything was going to be okay.

Tears welled up in his eyes, he pulled uselessly at the chains on his wrists, already chaffed raw and bleeding sluggishly.

"Yeah I can see if he wants to talk to you" Grant says in a voice opposite to how he sounded when he was on top of Peter, *moaning, thrusting...* Peter jolts with a cringe.

"No looks like he's out on the pier with the other kids here. He's having a blast, they've been swimming all afternoon. I'm going to have to drag his shrivelled body out by the ankles by the looks of it with the fun he's having" he chuckles lightly, there's a pause, "yeah I'll get him to call you a bit later, he said something about a movie night tonight though" he adds.

Peter realises what he was doing. Setting up the alibi perfectly.

He wants so desperately to hear her voice, even if it's only for a second. Just to wash out the sounds of Grants derogatory words still bouncing between his ears.

Peter realises the call is over when Grant is standing in the doorway, grinning knowingly.

"Just you and me now Pete"

*Hasn't it always been?*

Peter stares at the ceiling resigned to his hell. Horribly tired and drowsy since being left alone for so long since the last assault. He wishes distantly that he had treasured the peace.

Grant was already moving forward, slow and stalking.

Peter bites his lip to silence his sob. It was too much. *Too much.*

“Grant” he whimpers, voice broken and defeated.

“Grant please, no more, I can’t - ” his sobs rip through. Losing control, he sobs loudly into the open room, sound echoing off the bare walls.

He’s not sure if it’s a panic attack or just his raw grief and terror.

“I might be more convinced if you begged” Grant leered, cunning humour etched into his features.

“Please Please Please” Peter sobs, strained and shameless, desperate for any kind of reprieve.

Grant looks as though he’s taking pity, feigning his consideration.

“Maybe if you begged... *on your knees*, I might be more inclined to help you out” he says after a pause, smile broadening darkly.

Peter lets out a harsh breath, steeling himself. Which end was worse?

The pain radiating through him answers him quick enough.

He nods his head, pulling at the chains on his wrists to confirm his affirmation. Grant smiles pleased, dangerous and shrewd. He moves to Peters bedside, undoing the chains slowly, only to

caress Peters shaking arms gently.

Peter holds himself still, allows the shame. When he's given enough space to move, he falls gracelessly to the floor, arms cramping from the prolonged stretch, knees buckled and jarred.

Peter catches the rapidly forming bruises around his thighs and hips as his head drops down in submission. His stomach knotting painfully.

"Such a good boy. So good for me" Grant breaths, dirty hand coming up to rest on Peters cheek, Peter resists the urge to flinch back.

"So sweet and ruined, aren't you?" He groans, fingers dipping closer to Peters lips.

"My whore" he says before plunging the two digits inside. Peter gags, but composes himself, letting the appendages rest heavily on his tongue, salty and heated.

"Wasn't going to stick around with May that long. She was just another convenient fuck" he says lowly. Peter cringes at the mention of her.

"But then I saw you"

"Saw your pretty lips and fuck-me-eyes and I couldn't wait to have you. To train you to take me" he growls, caught up in the memory.

Peter's trying to comprehend the words while trying desperately not to vomit again. He wasn't going to be getting any food for a while, he didn't want to waste what he already had.

But the words are just as sickening as the fingers scraping his pallet.

"Was never about that slag of an Aunt, nothing more than a bed warmer while I waited for the real thing" Peter's fists clench at the insult to his family, but at the revelation Grant was never falling for May, only falling closer to getting Peter right into his trap.

“And now I have you. Trained as good as a dog, on your knees and begging for me to fill you up again” he moaned now, fingers pressing in and out in a parody of the sick acts that he was referring to.

“Guess you’re begging wasn’t that affective after all” he laughed unapologetic.

Hot fear rips through Peter. *No more!* He couldn’t do it, he couldn’t.

A rush of adrenaline hits him, taking over the wheel and leaving Peter in the backseat of this rash decision. He bites down on the fingers as hard as he can, hearing Grant shout distantly, but his ears are roaring. Desperate to not be forced down again, he throws a messy but effective shove into Grants stomach, sending him sailing to the floor.

Peter scrambles away, half crawling half lunging, Grant on the ground clutching his rapidly bleeding fingers.

Zeroing in on the watch, Peter leaps, sobbing in triumph as his hands clasp the cold metal.

He stands up quickly, clutching it tightly, swaying dizzily. Running out of the bedroom he rushes for the door, only to drop the watch with his violently shaking fingers.

He lets out a cry of frustration watching it bounce and slide under the ratty sofa.

Throwing himself to his knees frantically, he crawls to the couch, hands searching desperately under the piece of furniture.

He can hear Grant stumbling up, cursing loudly in the other room. He redoubles his search.

His hands find the metal, the footsteps closer now.

Still shaking and eyes blurred with tears he fumbles with the watch, trying and failing to get a grip on the panic button on the left.

Finally, he gets it, holding it down frenzied. The face of the watch flashes, a countdown in effect.

5

Peter feels the simmer of hope well in his stomach.

4

Grants footsteps are closer, shaking the floors as he moves.

3

Tony was coming, Tony would save him.

2

A hand grips his ankle, wrenching it with so much force he drops the watch in surprise. A cry whooshes out of his lungs as he's dragged backwards, away from the watch, away from his saviour.

The watch holds on the number 2, before the number dissolves and returns to the time.

## Chapter End Notes

Hectic

Come yell at me at [ironwebbs.tumblr.com](https://ironwebbs.tumblr.com)

Thanks for all your support! Sorry for hurting bby bean

## Chapter 8

### Chapter Notes

Thanks for being patient! Heres part 2 of the climax!

This is very graphic and explicit. Again, as always, please heed the warnings.

Enjoy.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Peter can see the watch from where he lays, cheek pressed into the wood, flat on his stomach.

It's still under the couch, apparently Grant hadn't seen Peter grab it and try to use it, he had just thought Peter had attempted a pathetic escape.

He explained just as much as he paced around Peter, still nursing his fingers, taking breaths from his monologue on how badly Peter had screwed up from his attempt at leaving by kicking or pressing his foot down agonisingly on Peters thin body.

There was a small pool of blood, tears and drool gathered around Peters cheek, his breaths coming out in wheezes from the multiple hits to his stomach and kidneys. A brutal force to his face had led him to be unable to breathe out of his noes... *broken probably*.

“Even how you try to escape me is pathetic Peter, just like you. You play boy genius around *Stark*, yet here you are as dumb as a halfwit” Grant laughs coldly, his face grimacing as he says Tony's name, as if the name itself disgusted him.

Peter had stopped listening to the words though. He was just staring blankly at the watch, tucked under the couch.

He could try to leap for it again? He could do it when Grant had turned away?

He could also feel where each kick and hit had impacted on his skin. He could feel where the throbbing radiating pain between his legs still screamed for attention.



Peter was torn between not wanting to provoke another attack and desperately needing to escape Grants clutches immediately.

“Maybe this will teach you a lesson Pete” he hears distantly alongside the clanking of metal. His mind doesn’t register the words as a sentence, only foreign sounds that infiltrate his pained distressed mind.

The whip of metal cutting through air and the accompanying slicing pain on his back registers though.

*Not again* Peter thinks at first.

Then, he can’t think at all.

He turns his head to defend himself from the blows, only to see Grant waiving a metal fire poker high above his head before hitting Peters back again on the downswing. The pain monumental.

The metal hits his bare back again, so much force behind every blow it immediately brings its horrible blood curling pain. Peter lets out a howl, completely taken off guard by the excruciating hurt.

He tries to writher away, but Grant stops him with a kick to the face, immobilising him.

The rod hits again, and again. Peter screaming through his clenched teeth, hot tears join the pool of blood beneath his face.

He can feel the slick heat of viscous blood start to gather around his spine, before sliding down his skin.

The rod hits again

And again

*And again.*

Its licks like fire moulded by a thousand knives.

He can hear Grants words and laughter over the rush of his ears, he registers another voice.

His own.

A constant stream of begs and pleas, broken by sobs and screams.

He can't see the watch anymore through his tears. He doesn't want to see it. See it mock him. Remind him how close he had come and how excellently he had failed.

Even when the hits stop, Peter feels as if they hadn't. He knows his back is a mess of torn flesh and blood. Throbbing and ripping furiously with every heave of air that Peter takes.

The pool under his face had graduated into a puddle under his whole body. Thick crusting blood seeping into his naked skin.

He suddenly flipped onto his back, a scream wrenched from his mouth as his back contacts with the dirty splintered wood underneath.

Grant was still speaking, Peter can see his mouth move but he couldn't hear the words. He was still babbling himself. *'Please please please'* was all he could manage.

Grant was on his knees, Peter couldn't remember when the change in positions happened, his brain whiting out and short circuiting.

He sees the movement before he feels the pain.

Grant gripping his legs, splayed open in the air, the harsh thrust of hips, the room now moving in quick succession of back and forth and he was pulled and pushed.

And then the pain - the horrible searing burn between his thighs, the scrape of his agonised back with each push, the gut wrenching panic that it was happening again.

Peter blacked out.

And when he comes to, it was still going.

...

“Why did you bring me here?” Peter croaks from where he lays, still sprawled on the grimy floor. Grant, who was sitting close by, cigarette hanging loosely from his mouth, smiled with bemusement.

“You don’t like it here?” He smirks, drawing a long breath from the cigarette before tapping it on his thigh.

“Are you going to kill me?” Peter asks quietly. His voice scratchy and pained. He hates that he almost sounds hopeful.

Grant hums, taking another puff, he looks out the window above Peters head. “Nice day isn’t it?”

Peter grits his teeth and turns his head away, watching the light stream through the window, dust mites flying in its wake.

“Up you get Pete, let’s not waste it, hey?” Grant says faux cheerfully.

Peter closed his eyes, listening to Grant stand up, his steps closing in. Peter lays still, unresponsive.

A searing burn connects with his shoulder junction, a shout escaping his lips.

Grant pulls back the smoking cigarette butt, flicking it off to the side.

Peter looks up through blurred eyes, hand cupping the burn. Grant hauls him up, wounded groans and whimpers accompany as Peters pain is intensified.

He stumbles and falls once he's upright, leaning heavily on Grant for support.

Grant moves purposefully, hand gripping painfully on Peters upper arm, dragging him along through the house.

Peter trips to keep up, hissing as his back rips anew.

The front door is unlocked and Peter is blinded by the bright sun now streaming through the open door.

Grant is still moving, too fast for Peter to keep up. The chilled air and moist floor sends a shiver through Peter, still completely bare.

They move through the woods, Peter cries out as his feet land painfully on sharp rocks and sticks, he drops to his knees skinning them painfully on the forest bed.

He is pulled up again, bruising grip on his arm, stumbling and resisting the force.

Where were they going?

Was this it? Was Grant finished with him?

They come to a stop in a clearing, a small fire burning freshly in the middle. Grant pushed Peter forward so that he lands painfully in the dirt, body moving towards the warmth of the flame.

He adjusts himself until he's on his knees, the pain shooting up his spine from sitting on his bottom too much to bare.

Grant circles the fire, rubbing his hands together before holding them out over the flames to warm up.

He looks like the devil from where Peter watches, flames flickering over his dark face, eyes black as ink.

The sun was setting now, the shade of the trees making the temperature drop. The fire wasn't helping much with Peter in no clothes, exposed to the elements like this.

He stares at Grant with trepidation, nervous to see what would happen next, how this would end for him.

He has a fleeting moment of fear, if these were his final moments, shouldn't he enjoy his last minutes of his life?

He stares at the lowering sun, remembering every sunset and sunrise he had experienced, every time the warmth of its rays hit his face as he sat outside bathing in her heat.

He wishes it didn't have to end like this, but he's grateful he's able to be outside, where he loves most. Not cooped up in that horrible cabin, surrounded by the nightmares he had experienced.

Dropping his chin to his chest, Peter begins to cry. Soft tears falling down his cheeks. He thinks of those he loved, those he wished he could tell that he loved more.

A cold resignation sets in his bones. *Acceptance*. He was finished suffering, he could finally be free.

The warmth of the sun and fire leave suddenly, a shade looms over him.

He looks up through wet lashes to see Grant standing over him. His hand reaches forward to cup Peter's tear stained cheek, thumb wiping away the mess.

Peter hated the pretence of intimacy. He wished Grant would just get on with it. Would just end the suffering *now*.

Grant coos patronisingly, rough grip on Peters chin bruising. “Why the tears Parker?”

Peter sniffed, trying to catch his breath. “If you’re going to do it, just do it” he whispers brokenly, more tears slipping down his cheeks, body trembling in the cool wind.

Grant laughs loudly, fingers gripping even tighter. “Just do it huh? Don’t think you’re in a position to be making demands kid” he smiles coldly.

“So ready to give it up though? Thought you’d fight a little harder. Never really understood what Stark saw in you. Billionaire cuddling up to a 15 year old.” He pauses before leaning in closer to Peter, breath hot on his cheek.

“A pathetic, weak, whiny, problem child that nobody wanted. Not mummy or daddy, not uncle Ben, not even your aunt really? She was quite happy to paw you off to me”

Peters face warms with shame in the words. He *was* pathetic for giving in so easily.

“Mind you, I’m not that surprised about Stark. Always knew that pervert would be grooming little boys to fill his empty sad life. All that money but still a nobody” he grins, dangerous glint in his eye.

Peters hands clench at his side, his own eyes flicker with danger. “Don’t talk about him like that” he says lowly.

“Or what Petey? What are you going to do? Maybe I *will* kill you. Frame it all on your precious Tony... I’m sure I could convince him to come and join us down here, then tell the police he took you out for the day and I didn’t see you both again?”

Peter pales. But Grant continues.

“I wonder what he’d agree to if he was here and saw you like this. What he’d let me do to him to

save you”

Anger and terror flushed through Peter at the mere thought of Grant laying a hand on Tony. Without thinking he pushes forward, Grant tumbling back in surprise.

Peters on him seconds, raining down punches left and right across his smug face, a cry of pure rage bursting out of him.

“You stay away from him!” Peter yells, landing more blows down on Grants face and chest, messy and uncoordinated. His brittle strength leaves the punches weak and barely affective- just enough to render Grant speechless and relatively incapacitated.

He recovers quicker than Peter anticipates.

One moment Peter is raising his arms up again, face red with the strain, and the next he’s being thrown to the side, rolling into the muddy floor.

Grant pulls himself up in no time, face pure hatred and anger.

Peter whimpers, all rage wooshed out. Grant lifts Peters light body up with a punishing grip to his neck, displaying his undeniable strength.

Peter wriggles to free himself from the grip, oxygen cut off, and limbs flailing wildly, legs kicking in the air from where he was being held off the ground.

They move a few steps before Peters being released again, falling onto the heated ground.

And then he realises what he has fallen into.

A piercing scream rips through his throat, the paralysing shock lasts only a second before he’s throwing himself out of the fire, rolling in the damp mud to disintegrate the remaining flames.

He keeps screaming as he feels his skin sizzle, body begging for mercy from the agony.

He keeps screaming as he tries to press down on the burns, only aggravating them more.

He keeps screaming as Grant grabs him again, yells into his face and pushes him to the floor.

He keeps screaming as he's lifted and carried away from the horrifying flames.

He keeps screaming until he blessedly passes out.

...

Peter spends the next few hours (maybe days?) chained to the dirty bed, flat on his back. Most likely to continue the punishment.

And boy, was it continuing.

Peter was delirious with pain. It washed over him constantly. His surroundings irrelevant. He didn't care where Grant was or what he was doing. Peter was too overwhelmed to think.

Every move of his body, every twitch of his muscles, exploded in pain.

His right side of his body was blistered and burnt, an angry red and a black soot covering the entire side.

The burning singe of his skin was indescribable. Peter in a constant state of agony and anguish.

He's not sure of much, but he knows death would be easier than this, and he begs for the pain to end, for Grant to end him.

The pain only got worse. And nobody let him die.



He knew he was getting infected- no doubt with the foul sheets, the filthy floor and the dirt caked into his skin. His wounds were red and inflamed, still dripping with dark sluggish blood last time he managed to look back, rolled uncomfortably on his side. His burns weeping and pussing grotesquely.

Peter wasn't sure how long he spent like that. He came to, to see sun and again to see stars. He didn't know if Grant had been with him at any point of the day, or night.

His body tried desperately to heal, but he wasn't eating, he wasn't drinking and he was sure no medicinal methods had been taken by Grant to improve his condition.

Peter knew he would die soon.

Maybe Grant saw it too, because the next time Peter focused on his surroundings through the haze of his pain, Grant was there, crouching beside the bed, face swollen with bruises from Peters attack.

"Please" Peter spluttered. "Please kill me"

Grant pursed his lips and placed a large cold hand on Peters burning forehead. Peter leaned into the touch immediately whimpering with relief.

The next time Peter blinked, Grant had moved, now standing above the bed holding a cup of water.

"Drink it. It will help you" he says gruffly, tipping the cup towards Peters cracked lips.

He drinks it greedily, body frantic for hydration.

It does help the pain, but it makes everything worse.

Peter can't feel his body almost immediately, his limbs seemingly detached. His head feels clearer, more focused, less hazed and uncoordinated.

But the room is also darker, eerily so. Peter feels like maybe he fell asleep and this was a nightmare, but he can still feel the dig of the handcuffs on his wrists and the irritating itch of the cotton blanket beneath him.

The shadows around him begin to morph and take shape, moving closer to the bed.

Terrified, Peter jolts, helplessly moving his body away from the edge, only to be stopped by the chains.

He shouts in fear, calls out for help as the inky darkness sweeps into the bedding around him. Threatening to drown him.

Peter might be screaming, he wasn't sure.

He wasn't sure of anything.

The shadows move and taunt him, gripping and slipping over his body like tidal waves.

It's horrifying and terrorising. Peter screamed for help until his voice gave out and no sounds came through, but no one came for him.

...

The dark figures turned clearer the third time Grant had pressed a cold glass to Peters mouth, thick liquid dripping down his parched throat.

Despite the reprieve it gave him from his disabling injuries, he dreaded every time Grant would appear, holding onto a full cup.

The dark shadows continued to loom around him, but this time a shadow took shape into more of a bodily figure. Peter choked back his cries of fear as the figure approached him, terrified of who was in his room, why they didn't look like Grant, would they help him?

Through the dimness of the room, Peters eyes finally adjust to the face of the intruder. It takes

Peter many gasps and shuddering breaths before he can whimper out a name.

“Ben?”

Ben moves closer the bed, surveying Peters state. Peter’s got tears rolling down his face, he can feel them. But Ben was right there. Ben was alive?

“Ben? *Please* - ” he croaks when Ben continues to hover, not muttering a word. Peter wriggled uselessly in his binds. “Help me Ben *please*” he sobs brokenly, begging his uncle to free him from this prison.

Ben sways in the darkness of the room, only illuminated by the silvery glow of the moon. He glances from Peter to his own stomach. Peter follows his eyes, a choked noise pulled from his throat when he notices the growing stain on Bens shirt.

“Ben! You’re – You’re bleeding! Ben!” he cries, the words husky and frantic. The chains rattle as he pulls them more desperately.

“You could have saved me Peter. Why did you let me die?” Ben says, his voice airy and sharp, sounding nothing like the Ben he remembered. Blood spills from his mouth with every word.

Peters eyes widen in shock, he shakes his head. “Ben, I didn’t – I couldn’t” he says pained, tears pouring down his face now, face heating with his sobbing.

Ben leans forward, and Peter pushes backwards, away. He squeezes his eyes closed, waiting for the fatal blow that Ben was sure to deliver. No pain comes.

“Peter?” the voice is different now, less cold, but closer.

Peter braces himself before opening his eyes. The figure looming over the bed wasn’t Ben anymore. “Tony?” he whispered.

“Yeah buddy, it’s me” Tony replies, his eyes warm and concerned, just like Peter knew. His heart slowed down from panic, immediately calmed by Tonys presence.

He moves to reach out, hands catching in the sharp metal. He cries weakly. Tony sees his distress, moving closer to hover his hands over Peter's face, never touching. Peter seeks out the familiar warmth from the hands, but he finds none.

“You need to leave Tony, Grant will come back and-” he says desperately, eyes darting to the open door, looking miles away.

Tony only hums, face still with that look of pacification, kindness, love. Peter drinks it in greedily.

“You need to get out Peter. You need to find a way” Tony says, fiercer now.

“I can’t – tried, he’s too strong” Peter whispers back, fear protruding.

“You can Peter. You’re stronger. You need to help me find you. You need to find a way” he says again, more frantically. “Help me find you Peter” he whispers before disappearing like smoke.

Peter cries out pitifully for him. Begging him to come back. To help him find a way.

The shadows dance and mock him for his efforts.

When his head clears he recognises it was a hallucination, but suddenly he can’t wait for Grant to walk in again with the water, to let him see Tony again, even for a moment.

...

Tony comes and goes through the hours.

Peter clings to him desperately, without being able to touch. Sometimes he keeps his eyes trained on Tony when Grant was on top of him, groaning and thrusting.

Tony would make it alright. Tony would find him.

He could feel himself growing weaker and weaker. Every time he swallowed the liquid and came to in between 'sessions' he was less himself. His body in a constant furnace state, yet impossibly cold, shaking and sweaty.

Grant gets more concerned when he comes in with the waters, manoeuvring Peter to study his non-healing wounds.

The next time he comes back, he's holding a bowl. Peter's stomach growls immediately at the smell of food, his mouth filling with saliva.

He crouches beside Peter and feeds him messily until the bowl is empty, Peter gasping on the bed from the strain of eating.

The clarity that nutrition gives is staggering, his injuries intensify, and he cries out harshly, back arching with the intensity.

The pain is gone in a few minutes, Peter recognises the same drug effects as the water, maybe more this way, stronger. He falls in the black terror of the inky shadows, seeking Tony out desperately.

Tony doesn't come this time, only monsters with claws and teeth, biting and ripping into his already torn body. He screams out for Tony to save him, cries for Ben, for May, for anybody. He even cries out for Grant. To help him. *Kill him.*

Peter's too exhausted to feel the agony when the drug wears off this time.

But when he wakes, a humiliating terror sinks into his stomach.

The sheets around and below him were more damp than usual, sticking horribly to his skin. The stench is dizzying, and Peter cries mortified as he takes in his soiled state.

Grant walks in after long moments of Peter's turmoil. He sobs as soon as he locks eyes with Grant. Red with shame and disgrace.

Grants face scrunches immediately before turning murderous. Peter shrinks back, shaking like a leaf in the bed, even the chains jingling.

“Are you fucking kidding me Peter? Are you that much of an invalid?” He snarls, crossing the room quickly to Peters side.

Peter whimpers “I’m sorry – I didn’t mean...” he stutters. Grant’s not listening, his hand comes up and down harshly on Peters cheek, whipping his head to the side.

“Goddamn baby. Disgusting and pathetic” Grant is muttering. It’s just as humiliating as the act itself.

Peter doesn’t even realise the chains are gone on his wrists, his arms staying in the taunt position, breaths coming out ragged and terrified. There’s a hand gripping harshly in his hair, causing him to fall out of the bed painfully.

He cries out, his muscles protesting to the movement after so long immobile. His injuries screaming to attention.

The hand pulls harder, dragging him across the floor. Peter cries and struggles weakly, trying to dislodge the hand.

The door is opened, and Peter shuts his eyes quickly at the bright sun shining through, blinding him. He’s still moving but he keeps his eyes closed, trying to adjust to the brightness.

He doesn’t have enough time to it seems, as he’s being lifted and dropped immediately onto a cold surface and the light disappears as quickly as it had appeared.

Peter hears the sound of chains again before he opens his eyes again, surrounded by darkness.

His shaking hands stretch out cautiously, not making it very far before they come in contact with cold walls. He reaches up and finds the same conclusion above him.

His hands map out his surroundings frantically, finding himself in a box no larger than himself. He felt like he is in a coffin.

Overwhelming panic surges through his veins. He calms his breathing as best as he can, but he is panicking.

Memories of being trapped under rubble and concrete pressing on his spine claw out from nowhere. He squeezes his eyes shut and tries to focus on other things around him. Not the closing in of the 5 walls around him.

He tried to conjure up Tony without the aid of drugs in his system, but the darkness was suffocating, and the air was thickening. He was going to run out of oxygen.

His held his breath, desperately trying to conserve the air but his panic was shuddering through him and he was gasping for air within seconds, hands braced on the roof of the box.

Peter could still smell and feel the mess on him, mixing with his sweat and the metallic scent of his blood.

Oh god, he was going to be stuck here.

Grant must have been so mad he'd locked Peter here and left him to die.

Peter didn't want to die like *this*.

No, he wouldn't. Grant was too calculating. Had planned this too well. He would want to see it happen, wouldn't be satisfied with Peter being hidden.

The thought settles Peters churning fear for a moment. He closes his eyes and steadies his breathing, trying to slow his heart rate. The smell is making his eyes water, and the chill was making his muscles fatigue from the shivering. He could do this.

He must have closed his eyes for a moment, because when they opened again he forgot that he was trapped, and the clawing terror piked up again.

Peter had to stop himself from throwing his body around in the container to try and get himself out. No. He had to endure it. Grant would get him out soon. This was punishment for making a mess. He deserved this. Grant would come soon.

Grant did not come soon.

Peter's anxiety was through the roof. His injuries had been opened in his squirming, his fever raised and fell in the hours that ticked by. He was shivering violently with a suppressed panic attack. His tears had dried on his cheeks a long time ago, but he could already feel the wave of new ones coming.

The walls were definitely getting closer. The box was shrinking. Grant had left him.

The thought alone sends him over the edge. The broken scream tears out of him. His hands bang uselessly on the lid, what's left of his nails scratching frantically on its surface – looking for catches.

He swings his body left and right, colliding painfully with the sides. His agonising pain is dulled by the panic attack. It's crushing through him, like a storm in the sea.

The screams and begs are bubbling out of his mouths. "I'm in here! Please let me out! I can't breathe!"

He flings his body around, hysterically pushes with all his strength, it doesn't even make a dent.

Sobs wrack his body, the air feeling thinner now after his terror episode.

He slams his head back until it collides with the bottom of the box. This would be easier. Just knock himself out and then he wouldn't have to feel trapped anymore in this shrinking coffin.

His head connects painfully with every side of the box until his eyes are fuzzy even in the darkness.



He closes them and waits for the inevitable.

When he opens them again, not sure of how much longer had passed, the box was still closed, with him dying inside.

...

Peter counts the seconds lucidly, his head bouncing slowly from side to side. His hands are raw and torn, his injuries heightened, and his senses dulled.

At some point between what Peter had assumed was the third or fourth hour, his brain had found another way to cope. It felt as if he had detached, distanced himself from his hell.

At hour six (although Peter may have lost count somewhere between passing out from a panic attack and hitting his head hard enough to feel his body spin) the lid opened.

His eyes don't need to adjust because it's already dark outside. The blur of Grant is forming and dissolving however, so maybe the prolonged darkness had some effect on his eyes.

Peter lays limp in the box, Grant staring at him impassively, taking in his state.

Hands grab onto his forearms, hoisting him out of what he now realises is an esky. He can't find his balance, too disassociated, injured and sick. Grant gives up on leading him and picks him up bridal style instead.

Peter's head lolls back, he watches the stars before they are cut off by the roof of the cabin. He feels as though he's watching himself from above, a ghost of himself.

He's dropped into freezing water none too gently. A bath, he notes, as he comes up gasping for air. Grant pushes him back down beneath the water, holding him there while Peter weakly struggles. But weak is the operative word, and soon enough he goes limp as Grant pulls him up.

He goes down twice, three more times, holding his breath and savouring his struggle attempts, gasping fruitlessly as he's brought up.

The 'bath' helps to remove some of the dirt and blood and *other things* caked onto his skin, relieving some of the worst itches, but the rest is too set to remove, like glue on his body.

He stays limp as he's roughly towelled down and carried back to the bedroom, his mind has given in and his body had followed suit, not even making an effort to resist anymore.

Peter had broken.

His spirit had left him somewhere in the esky. Or maybe it was in the fire. Or really, somewhere in the apartment the first time Grant had laid his hands on Peter.

This was a dehumanising feeling. He felt as though he had given up his humanity to serve as a toy for Grant. A pet.

And he didn't want to think about it anymore.

So, he floated.

The drinks were back immediately, pressed to his bleeding lips without a word. He swallows it thickly, and lies back on his own accord, raising his hands at the height of the bed frame.

He can see Grant smile, pleased, as he leans over to fasten the cuffs.

This would be over soon enough.

Grant had to return soon, he had accounted for five days already out in the cabin, meaning this would all be over in two days.

Two more days. And then it was finished.

Peter drifted further, sinking deeper into the thin mattress. Grant was undressing beside him, and Peter rolled his head to watch through half lidded eyes.

He looked back up to the ceiling, tracing the peeling paint with his unfocused and spotted sight. The bed dipped around him, a distant grip and adjustment to his splayed legs and then the horrible sting as he was breached.

Peter let out a groan, broken and pained, his body tensing for a moment before he caught the next wave of disassociation and parted ways with his suffering body.

The paint on the roof was moving as his body was shoved, but he kept his eyes locked to it. Wondering when the place was built, what did they have in mind when they created a shack in the middle of the forest, did they know what was happening to him in here... was he the first boy to come?

Out of the corner of his eye, he can see the tell-tale signs of the drugs poison, the darkness leaking over the floorboards.

He squeezes his eyes closed, not wanting to see anymore darkness crawling around him, but it doesn't help. The inkiness follows him behind his eyelids and taunts him for trying to escape it.

Grant was gripping tighter on his hips, tight enough for Peter to feel a dull pop as the grip, the pressure of the position his legs were in and the relentless thrusting finally took its toll.

Peter felt the rush of hot pain, but he swallowed it down with a whine, eyes darting to latch on to something to remove himself again.

He finds it eventually, a shadow in the corner.

He tries not to think that it looks vaguely like a man that Peter had screamed for not long ago.

But Tony wasn't there. He couldn't find Peter and Peter was too broken to help him look anymore.

...

The hours start to blur together. Peter didn't know anymore if it was his fever, the pain, or his mind checking out. He barely had the willpower to hold onto one cohesive thought at a time, the words and ideas dissolving blankly in his head.

The drinks were a constant. Peter didn't see people anymore, only looming shadows hovering and mocking. They still terrified him every time his eye caught on to them, but now he didn't have the strength to move away or protect himself. Laid open and bare, unprotected and unstable.

Grant's presence was stronger, lurking in the shadows, stopping in the doorway to watch Peter's trembling sweaty body. Sometimes Peter caught a deft lust in his eyes, other times anger, sometimes it was just as blank as his own.

There were moments that Peter realised Grant was on him, touching and caressing, pushing and pulling, slapping and squeezing. But his mind registered and then evaporated back into the foggy mist that encompassed his brain. Like clouds and cotton swirling around aimlessly inside him.

Grant comes in with food on one occasion, offering it to Peter. Peter can only see the terrifying coffin in which he was locked in and moans weakly, turning his head away. Grant doesn't seem phased by his reaction, and simply grips Peter's chin so hard, Peter feels the bones of his jaw creak warningly.

The food is forced into his mouth, hands pressing over his lips until it was swallowed. Peter sobs through it, ugly tearing sobs that wrack his body, pulling helplessly away from the grip. It's the most aware he's felt in a long time, and the only word hammering through his brain is a deafening *NO!*

Once the bowl is empty, and Peter's covered in food, tears and spit, Grant leaves.

And Peter disassociated again.

When he focuses again, he's disorientated.

The familiar pattern on the ceiling is no longer above him, and the irritating sheets no longer below him.

He realises he's moving. The walls and light passing him as he's carried through the room. He sees the bathtub first, a cry escaping his lips at the thought of being held under again. It's a pathetic heartbreaking sound. Broken and afraid.

But they don't go to the bathtub. Instead he's deposited on a seat. *A toilet.* It's a cry of relief this time, so happy to not have to have a repeat of the last time.

Grant waits patiently outside until Peter is finished, coming in to collect him once more.

Peter catches his reflection in the mirror as they move through.

He doesn't recognise himself.

They come back to the bedroom, and Peter is thrown carelessly back onto the bed. His wounds protesting loudly.

Peter cringes and raises his arms to the head board, waiting for the click of metal on his shredded wrists.

It doesn't come.

Grant walks away, leaving Peter to stare dumbly at the door frame from where he last saw him. *This is a test* Peter decides quickly.

He keeps his arms raised, weak fingers curling into a grip on the metal bars of the bed frame to keep them stable. His body aches with the strain, trembling in trepidation if he were to fail this challenge. He keeps himself as still and small as possible, desperate to succeed and avoid the anger.

Grant doesn't come back for hours it seems, and Peter waits quivering with fear. His mind threatens to leave again, but he is frantic to stay alert, just in case his arms fell when he stopped thinking. Sweat was gathered on his brow, arms shaking with the strain, blood staining his lip from

where he had bitten hard enough to subdue his cries of frustration.

When he does return, it's dark outside from what Peter can tell. He simply stalks into the room, and undresses in the corner.

Peter whines softly, hands gripping the headboard more tightly. He wanted so badly to not feel or see, like he had trained himself to do. He didn't want to experience this again head on. But he couldn't let go of the bars, he couldn't relax his body to fail.

Grant was crawling into the small bed, lying on his side next to Peters shaking body. His large cold hands traced softly on Peters arms and stomach, revelling in the cuts, bruises and burns. Peter clenches his eyes closed, breath coming out in puffs from his mouth. *Don't move, don't move.*

"Such a good boy Peter. Didn't move at all. So good for me" Grant whispers into his ear.

He didn't fail. Relief floods through him. He fights against his relaxing muscles to stay taunt and keep holding on. He couldn't let go now.

Grant adjusts him with strong hands, moving him so he too was on his side, hands still squeezing the frame, his head resting on left bicep.

Grants touches were still soft, reassuring. His hands traced and travelled over the marred and filthy expanse of Peters skin. Broken and damaged. Irreparable, even with a healing factor.

His right leg was raised and bent at the knee gently, and pressure almost immediately pressed against him. A rippling whine came through clenched teeth as Peter forced himself to relax part of himself. He didn't want to be here.

The moves were slow and directed, Grant breathing heavily and wetly into Peters neck, fingers still tracing idily.

Peter wishes this façade would drop, and Grant would go back to the hurtful touches and rough slam of hips. He could cope with that better than this.

But part of him was so touch starved of sensitive and gentle caresses, he found himself pressing back into the hands.

Disgusted with himself, he tried to fight it, but it felt so good, to not be in blaring pain for just a moment.

Tears poured down his cheeks, his eyes still squeezed shut. He hated himself. He was sick and deranged. How could he feel warmth from the coldest, most horrible creature?

“I’m not going to kill you Peter” Grant whispered, voice cracking with unsuppressed moans.

Peter was too caught up in his inner turmoil to understand.

“No, that would be a waste. You’re too good for me” he states between peppering kisses to Peters neck.

Peter groans, head lolling on his arms. He’s is glad that he is still repulsed by the intimacy, only tempted by the soft fingers circling his chest and hair. He cringes at the wet feeling still lingering on his neck, and the wet squelch of the degrading press of hips.

“I’m going to keep you. Here. With me. No one would find us here” he moans, pressing impossibly deeper.

Peters eyes snap open. His sob catches in his throat.

*No.*

Grant was still pressing, smack of hips harder and faster now.

“Just the two of us. Here forever. I’ll take care of you Peter, and you will take care of me”

The sentences are drawn out by breathless moans and gasps. Peters shaking anew. A feral terror sinking deep into his stomach.

*He couldn't. He would rather die.*

Images flash behind his eyes of his future. Trapped here forever. Left to disintegrate into the filthy mattress while Grant took and took until there was no more left.

How long would it take until he shut down?

Until he was barely a shell of a human. Just a body to keep Grants bed warm.

He couldn't.

Sobs tore out his throat now, tears pooled under his chin, streaking down his arm. His hands dropped from the frame to curl around his face, trying to protect himself from this fate.

“I love you Peter” Grant moaned, loud and shrewd. Hips halting before he spilled himself inside.

The hands resumed their gentle strokes on Peters body. Peter didn't want them anymore.

He waited until Grants gasps turned to snores. Eyes darting frantically around the room as he contemplated his doom.

*He couldn't stay here.*

He moved his body slowly, stopping with long intervals to ensure Grant was still asleep. He trembled with adrenaline, desperate to not let it get in the way of his extraction.

He almost yells out in triumph when his feet hit the floor and Grant rolls to his back with a snore.  
*Almost.*

Peters legs almost give way immediately, weak and unused for so long. Crippled with injury.



But his instinct to survive is stronger than gravity right now, and he moves sluggishly and slowly away from the bed, pausing at every creak in the wood.

He's sweating profusely and shaking violently when he steps into the living area, hand gripping the sofa tightly to steady himself and try to clear the cotton from his head and the mist from his eyes.

He sways when he straightens up, the room spinning dangerously. He needed to get out. *Now*.

Peter stumbles to the door, hand slipping of the handle before getting a grip. His heart beating so loud in his chest he was sure he was going to wake Grant up.

Tears were gathering in his eyes, terrified of what would happen when Grant found him.

The terror was almost enough to have him run back to the bed and beg for forgiveness now to dampen the inevitable punishment.

He presses his head to the wood of the door, mind in crisis.

He needed to leave, he needed to.

But he was scared.

Terrified like a child.

Thoughts crashed through his mind, the bad mixing with the good. The warm press of Tony's hands when they hugged, the cold walls of the esky, the content of sitting in bed with May all day, the sharp agony of Grants thrusts.

He rolled his head on the wood, stifling his sobs and moans.

His hand dropped from the door handle. He pushed himself away, turning back towards the

bedroom.

He got close enough to peer through the doorframe, Grant still heavily asleep on the bed. Unaware of Peters departure.

Peter checked for enough seconds to be sure before lowering himself to his knees. His hand reached out and felt around until it felt the cool metal.

He pulled his arm out slowly, gripping the watch as hard as he could this time.

He got back up, holding his groans of pains and willing away the dark shadows closing in around his eyes, threatening to pull him under.

Getting back to the handle of the door he didn't hesitate this time. Opening it enough to slip through and close it again.

The sun was dim, a cold chill breezed over his bare body. Peter was too focused to care.

He ran.

His body protested immediately, and he couldn't suppress the cry this time. His fight or flight kicked in harder, and he moved faster, relying on his bodies survival instinct to distance himself enough before he passed out.

The trees and bushes scrape painfully on his sensitive skin, whines and cries falling constantly from his mouth, along with shouts of pain when a particularly sharp stick caught in his burns.

"PETER!" he hears suddenly, loud and furious.

His body stops immediately, and he sobs terrified.

Scrambling, he takes off again, falling and tripping, gripping onto trees for support as his heart beats wildly out of his chest.

“I WILL FIND YOU” He hears, it sounds closer now.

He runs faster, ignoring his broken body. His foot catches a stump and he goes flying, tumbling down a short hill into the broken jagged rocks at the bottom.

Peter screams in agony as the rocks cut and slice his skin.

“PETER” it sounds too close.

Peter rolls away, falling immediately as he tries to stand. A quick look to his leg has his stomach rolling dangerously at the sight. Broken.

He drags his body further, sobbing and wheezing with pain.

His body was shutting down. He had used all the adrenaline left and now he couldn't move any further.

Laying on the floor, dirt and blood caking over his eyes, Peter stares at the watch, still gripped tightly in his hand.

He doesn't fumble this time. His shaking fingers press down on the panic button, watching the numbers count down from five. He's crying so hard by the time it gets to 1, he barely sees the number tick over to the small text on the screen of the watch. “*I'm coming kid*” is all it says before the screen returns to the time.

With a sob of happiness, Peter rolls onto his back, watching the sun streaming through the tree line.

He can distantly hear Grant still shouting his name, the sounds of branches breaking under his heavy urgent footsteps.

Peter felt his body begin to lose its fight. Exhausted and pushed to its absolute limit.

Peter thought about Tony finding him, dead, beaten beyond recognition. He wishes he could see Tony one final time before he gave up completely. But part of him knew he couldn't make it that long.

He didn't even know how far away they were. How long it would take for Tony to find him.

Did Tony even see the alarm?

Abandoning the thoughts from his mind, Peter begins to drift in and out of consciousness. Some part of him pushing to stay awake, to see it through.

He feels the earth shake around him, running footsteps coming closer to the spot where he lay.

The footsteps are urgent, panicked.

A shadow crosses his face, blocking the sun and sending a cold shiver through his body.

Through his wet lashes and blurred vision, Peter looks up.

"Think you could get away from me? You think I wouldn't find you?" Grant spits, out of breath and murderous.

Whimpering, Peter rolls away, dragging his body behind him as he tries to move from Grants clutches.

Grant tackles him down, covering his body and crushing him into the soil.

Peter screams as his leg is trapped underneath the weight. The pain was consuming. Dehumanising.

He was flipped onto his back, Grant straddling his hips. "You can't run from me Peter" he growls.

Peter can feel himself going. He was sprinting towards to the darkness in his mind.

*Let me die* he begs.

Peter almost misses it. Too engulfed in pain and distress to notice at first.

He sees the red and gold titanium boots land gracefully on the floor meters from his head. A smile twitches on his lips and then he gives in to the darkness for the final time.

...

A beeping and an uncomfortable brightness is the first things he registers as he begins to wake.

His body feels painless, surrounded by softness and warmth.

He works harder to open his eyes, to take in his surroundings. He was in a hospital.

*He survived.*

“Look who’s awake” he hears a familiar voice announce.

Peters head rolls on the pillow to face the sound.

A cold horror sinks in his bones, his mouth dropping in shock.

Grant smiled back.

WOWZAAA Please dont kill me :(

Go check out the amazing fanart for the fic by @atistraa

<https://ironwebbs.tumblr.com/post/175810458907/incredible-fanart-for-hindsight-by-the-talented>

and come send hate to [ironwebbs.tumblr.com](https://ironwebbs.tumblr.com)

## Chapter 9

### Chapter Notes

GOOD LORD! So the much anticipated chapter is up! I cannot believe the response from the last chapter! I am so overwhelmed by all of your enthusiasm towards this story! Thank you! I cannot thank you enough!

This chapter is 11k words of pure angst. Enjoy, my friends!

And please enjoy this amazing fan art for the previous chapter by nerd-of-sorts <https://ironwebbs.tumblr.com/post/176259342667/nerd-of-sorts-a-little-bit-of-fan-art-inspired>

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Tony was sitting in his lab, lazily adjusting a broken piece of the suit when the alarms begin to scream.

Every screen in his lab lit up like Christmas, red and flashing.

!SOS! PETER PARKER !SOS!

Tony felt his heart drop through his body. He had given Peter the panic button with the hopes of him never using it, but only a week later it was being triggered.

Hot dread filled him up, threatening to keel him over in a staggering anxiety attack. *Peter needs you* he quickly reminded himself. Peter needed Ironman.

The suit slid on to his body like water, moulding to him in breakneck speeds. He doesn't even think before thrusting off from the floor, FRIDAY already setting the coordinates.

He was shaking, he can feel the suit jittering with him.

Peter was in trouble.

*His kid* was in trouble.

100 scenarios roared through his head. Had he gotten lost? Was it to do with spiderman? Wasn't he with Grant?

The last one swirled through his mind like a record. *What had Grant done.*

Anger and terror flares through him and he pushes his repulsors to the limit, ignoring FRIDAYS warnings of the power.

His kid needed him.

They hit a national park, trees tall enough to block his vision from above. He quickly commanded the heat sensor to locate Peter, finding him and another figure immediately.

Tony dove down, landing directly next to where Peter lay.

And where Grant was on top of him.

Red hot fury burned within him he raised his palm to aim at Grant. "Get off him now" he snarled, venom dripping from his words.

Peter's vitals began to flash on the screen, NEEDS URGENT MEDICAL ATTENTION.

He stepped closer to Grant, firing up the repulsor in a warning. Grant quickly stood, raising his hands and backing away, eyes alarmed and afraid. Tony took note of his swollen and bruised face, he quickly looked down at Peter. His heart stopped beating.

Peter was naked, but you could hardly see any skin. His body covered in bruises, blood, dirt, cuts and inflamed burns. He felt bile rising in his stomach. He stood closer to Peter, protecting him from the threat. "Is he alive Fri?" his voice whispered out, terrified and shaking. "Signs of life detected boss, but he needs assistance, *now*" her voice responded, almost a hint of distress behind the mechanic drawl.



“What did you do to him” his own voice loud and hysteric.

Grant took a quick step back, his hands still shaking. They had blood on them. *Peters blood.*

“Tony, please, it’s not what it looks like! Let me explain” he stutters, voice breaking and shuddering.

Tony creases his brow, the helmet of his suit lifting up, so he could stare Grant down.

“You have five seconds to explain” he growled, hand still raised and ready to fire. He could see Peter in the corner of his eye, he felt the bile rise higher.

“We were kidnapped! These guys knew about Peter and you being close, they wanted information Tony, please, you need to help him, he’s not breathing! I was doing CPR before you got here”

Tony faltered for a moment. They were kidnapped? But he hadn’t received any demands?

His gut told him to not buy it. His heart told him he had taken too long to get to Peters side.

He dropped his arm “FRI call an ambulance, send them to this location. We will get to the main road.” He commanded before disembarking the suit.

He almost fell before reaching Peters body, dropping to his knees, the anger washing out of him the moment he was close enough to see the damage.

“Pete, open your eyes for me buddy” he whispered, hands trembling as he skittered over Peters bruised face. He didn’t want to think about the thick dark blood, the scratches and burns, the coolness and colour of his skin... but how could he not.

He began to shake, sensing that anxiety attack creeping closer.

He needed to stay strong for Peter. God. The kid was a mess. Tears were already filling his eyes at the sight.

Peter shouldn't be alive.

But he was.

And Tony needed to do his job and help him now.

Ignoring his shaking body and blood rushing terror, he scooped Peter up, cradling him close to his chest, trying to avoid the worst of the injuries as best as he could.

Grant moved to assist, and Tony swirled around "Don't you dare come near us" he snarled, subconsciously pulling Peter tighter.

Grant staggered back quickly, eyes wide with concern. "Please Tony, you need to believe me. We were out in the town, I don't know how they knew we were there! You must have told someone Peter was going away... they were waiting for him" he pleaded, hysteria in his voice.

Tonys stomach churned. A part of him had always feared Peter getting caught up in some stupid attempt to gain information on the company, but never like this. Grants panic was convincing, the shake of his hands, the tremor in his words. However, Tony couldn't shake his feeling of untrustworthiness towards Grant.

He eyed him warily, before continuing towards the road he had seen as he passed over the forest, noting that Grant had begun to trail behind at a safe distance. "FRIDAY, Scan the perimeter, tell me if you find any other persons" he demanded, watching as the suit flew into auto pilot, sailing into the sky and taking flight over the expanse of the trees.

Tony couldn't help himself, his eyes glazed down to Peter. He could see the burns clearer now, bubbling and full of puss, red and inflamed. In the spots where the skin had broken, dark infection was set. The bruises around his neck and torso were black, the cuts he could see on the kids' wrists were deep and obviously just as infected as the burns, if not worse.

He kept his eyes away from the bottom half of Peters torn and beaten body. His heart knew there was only one reason for him to be naked, but he couldn't bring himself to betray Peter to look.

Tony could feel his heart hammering in his chest, loud and shattered.

Somebody had hurt Peter.

They had tried to kill him.

And he wasn't fast enough to save him.

Terrible crushing guilt sailed through him. How could he have let this happen. He should never have let Peter go on the trip in the first place. They both had had reservations about the spontaneous getaway ... so why didn't Tony do more to stop Peter from leaving? From getting hurt?

Tony could hear the shrill sound of the ambulance sirens as he approached the clearing of the main highway. He pulled Peter's light, unmoving body closer to his chest, holding on for those last few seconds.

"You can do this kid. You can pull through. I'm here now" he whispered into Peter's matted blood coated hair.

He could see the lights getting brighter until the truck stopped in front and the paramedics were jumping out to take Peter from Tony's arms.

Tony's first instinct was to hold tighter and not let anyone touch Peter, but then he relaxed his hold and let them take the limp body away.

The panic was drowning his heart. Peter was so hurt. So, so hurt. And he didn't protect him. He didn't do the one thing he swore to do.

Without hesitating he jumped into the ambulance, ignoring the sounds of protest from the paramedics as he crowded in next to Grant, who was already being tended to.

Tony grabbed Grants shoulders and slammed them into the wall, taking small pleasure from the fear in his eyes and the sound of his head hitting the metal.

The paramedics moved to intervene, Tony stopping them with a hand up. “Talk. Now. Or I swear to god I will kill you and leave your body in the woods.” His words are cold, almost unrecognisable to himself. But he can hear the other doctors already trying to stabilise Peter, throwing around words like ‘broken, shock, unconscious, needs surgery yesterday’ and ‘how is this kid not dead’. He pushes harder on the shoulders.

Grant whimpers pathetically. “I don’t know, *I don’t know*. We were ambushed. They took us to this house, I don’t know where... they knocked me out. They had Peter in a separate room, I could hear them asking questions, about you, about your security, your suits – Peter didn’t say anything! He didn’t say a word! They just kept hurting him” He puts his head in his hands, his shoulders shaking.

Tony almost believes. He should believe. He has no reason not to.

But something is telling him not to.

“How did you get out? Where are they now?” He growls, his voice no softer.

“Peter, he must have got loose, they had left us alone, so he got free, then he came to me and we ran. He collapsed just before you got to us... I couldn’t find a pulse and I couldn’t lose him” there are tears in his eyes. Tonys blood boils at them.

Why couldn’t he believe him?

The paramedics looked sympathetically at Grant, and accusingly at Tony.

This was all Tony’s fault and he knew it. He couldn’t believe Grant because he knew it was his own fault.

He released Grants shoulders, slumping into the seat and rubbing his hands over his face. It was all his fault. Every cut, every bruise, it was all him.

His stomach rolled, hot prickling guilt and despair rising within him. The attack was closer and closer to the surface now. He had to keep it together.

He was no better than those people that laid their hands on a *child*. He may as well have been puppeteering them. It was all because of him.

Tears welled and slipped from his eyes, gathering in his hands where they covered his face.

He couldn't hear anyone anymore. Not Grant apologising, not the paramedics, not even Peters raspy weak breaths that he had been focusing on. Nothing other than his own beating heart. Wild and crushed.

"We're losing him!" the words cut through the air like a knife.

Tony's head snaps up, his eyes wide with disbelief. He feels frozen on the spot, the world moving in slow motion suddenly.

They move over Peters body, plugging and sticking things onto his bare chest, jumping up to straddle him, beating down compressions on his already bruised chest.

The sound that comes out of Tonys mouth isn't a cry as much as it is a whimper, petrified and in shock.

The car stops, and everything happens too fast for Tonys broken mind. White coats surrounding Peters gurney, running him away from the entrance into the theatre rooms, shouting words that not even Tony can comprehend.

He falls to his knees on the concrete, the attack hits him like a tidal wave.

The air stuck and trapped in his throat, suffocating and drowning him. He claws at his neck, desperate for air. *We're losing him.*

*We're losing him.*

*Losing him.*

Like a broken record in his mind.

His fists beat the concrete repeatedly until his knuckles bleed. He doesn't feel the pain in them though.

No. All the pain is in his heart. Soul crushing, earth altering pain. It's worse than the shrapnel. Worse than the chainsaw at his sternum, worse than a thousand deaths.

Peter was dead.

His kid was dead.

A child who loses his parents was an orphan, but what was a man who lost his child?

Was there even a name for that tragedy?

Hands were touching him, soft and reassuring, "Sir, Sir, breathe, there you go, deep breaths." He didn't recognise the voice, but it was calming, helpful. He evened out his breathing to match theirs, the panic parting a millimetre for him to form his thoughts again.

As soon as the storm had passed through his mind, he looked up slowly, meeting the kind brown eyes of the stranger. "Do you want to come inside, let me have a look at you..." she began, he could see her uniform now, a doctor. He shook his head. "My kid - " he began, but he couldn't finish, the tears bubbled to the surface again, and he grit his teeth around the fresh wave.

She understands though, nodding solemnly. "Is he in surgery?" she asks gently, he can't manage more than a nod of his head. She hums, rubbing his back softly. "The surgeons are very good here, you must trust them" she coaxes, moving him upwards until he was standing. He swayed slightly, leaning on her for support.

She guides them into the hospital doors, speaking quietly to another nurse before moving further into the building. Tony not even bothering to look where they were going until he was deposited into a seat. He could feel himself shaking, dying inside.

If Peter was dead, then he hoped he died too.

He dispelled the thought immediately. No. He would make the bastards who touched Peter suffer a long and painful death before he ever shut his eyes again.

The grief within him was gone in seconds, replaced with bubbling anger.

Somebody was going to pay.

The doctor was still watching him with concern “What was the name of your child, I can see the progress of the procedure” she offered. He had to take a deep breath before speaking. “Peter. Peter Parker” he choked out, the words swirling in his mouth sadly. He had never said Peter name with this much negative emotion in it before. His name was always synonymous with feelings of pride, happiness, paternal worry, exasperation, love.

Now it was depression, guilt and anger.

She nodded before walking to a desk and speaking in hushed tones. When she returned she wore a look of sadness, not unlike the one Tony was wearing himself.

“Good news is, he is stable. They managed to get his heart beating, but he isn’t out of the woods yet. There are a lot of open infections, and injuries that are very troublesome. You have a very strong son Mr. Parker. Not many people would survive the injuries that child has sustained” she placed a warm hand on Tonys shoulder, squeezing it reassuringly.

Peter was alive.

That was all he needed to hear. He wasn’t surprised she didn’t recognise him. He was a mess, clothes askew, hair a dishevelled, face pale and tear stained, eyes black with emotion. He preferred it this way. All the focus on Peter.

But Peter wasn't dead. And he needed to work.

"I need to call the family; do you mind if I use your phone?" He asked, his voice already turning hard with the swirling thoughts of what needed to be done.

In his panic to leave the workshop after hearing the call he hadn't brought anything with him. Not a phone, not even his wallet. He didn't have anything bar the suit, which was still flying around the woods as far as he was concerned.

The doctor nodded before guiding him back to the desk where a landline lay. Quickly dialling in Mays number, he pulled the phone up to his ear. He had memorised her number long ago. Recognising it every time it was patched through to his own line, or when he had to dial it to get permission or advice on something Peter related.

God, how would she react to this.

Her voice came and cut through his thoughts, "Hello May speaking?" How could he tell her Peter was so badly hurt? And it was Tonys fault.

"May, it's Tony"

"Tony? What's wrong?" her voice quickly changing to concern.

"It's Peter."

May sobbed over the line as he told her the bare minimum details. Her kid and her boyfriend had been the target of a cowardly attack. Tony didn't know how she was holding together when he was falling apart over only one person, when she had to worry about two.

Quickly giving her the directions to the hospital, he could hear her running through the apartment, promising to be there as soon as she could.

She didn't yell or banish Tony immediately as he had expected, so that was a win.



Even though the call was over, he pressed the phone to his forehead, steadying his breathing and using the dial tone to ground him.

“Have you seen the other man who came in with Peter? Grant Bates?” Tony questioned the nurse at the reception desk. He needed information on the kidnappers, descriptions, anything that could narrow it down for Tony to find them. To wrap his hands around their throats until they understood what would happen when they touched Tonys own. She began to type into the computer, smiling and directing Tony on where he was being held.

Tony thanked her quickly before running through the corridors to the room Grant was sitting in, propped up on the bed, smiling at the T.V which played some old sitcom.

Tony held his position in the doorway, obviously not having been seen yet. He creased his eyebrows. Grant didn't look like someone who had just been through a traumatic experience, he looked like it was just another day. How was this the same man who cried in the back of the ambulance as he tried to explain the pain he and Peter had endured.

A worrying dread was swirling in Tonys stomach. Something wasn't adding up.

He coughed purposefully, knocking on the door.

Immediately Grant slumped, smile replaced with worry. Tony only frowned harder. “Tony. Hey. Have you heard anything about Peter? They haven't told me anything since putting me here” his voice was shaking again, eyes welling up.

Tony didn't understand.

“He's still in surgery. But he's alive” he says carefully, eyeing Grant suspiciously.

Why was he getting such bad feelings about Grant? He had always had a strange feeling around him but now it had increased tenfold.

Grant nodded sadly. “He was so strong. They did some awful things to him. I begged him to tell them about you so he could stop being hurt, be he didn't”

“I thought you said you were kept in separate rooms?” Tony says slowly.

Grant falters. “Yeah we were, I shouted from where I was to him” he says quickly.

Tony purses his lips. “Can you describe the men? I want to get the local police on the search as soon as possible until I can call in the big guns to start looking”

Grants eyes widened. “If the cops are involved, they will come and find Peter, they said so! No! We need to lay low until we are safe again” his voice rose with slight hysteria.

“What are you saying? The police are the perfect people to keep you safe. As soon as we find these bastards the sooner we can put them away”

Surely Grant understood that.

“No, it will just make them angry. They will come for Peter, they will kill him!”

“What’s stopping them from doing that anyway?” Tony questioned. He could feel his anger rising. Why didn’t Grant want to keep Peter safe?

Grant held the eye contact strongly. “You don’t understand. I know you want to protect Peter *now*... when he’s already been hurt because of you, but you failed once, you don’t want to fail again”

The words made Tony almost stumble back, a cold prickle in his chest at the truth they held but also the confusion of Grant saying them.

“Grant what are you talking about... We need to keep them away from Peter” he tried to reason.

“You shouldn’t even be here. You are the reason Peter is hurt. You need to stay away from him” Grant spat, crossing his arms angrily, eyes like ice.

Tony knew it was his fault, but suddenly some of that blame was displaced. He hadn’t expected

this reaction from Grant. This defensiveness and the attitude.

“I’m trying my best to protect him now” Tony snapped back. “You clearly couldn’t do that for him wherever you were, but now I am doing what I can.”

“You don’t know what you’re getting yourself into” Grant snarled.

“Is that a threat?” Tony challenged back, stepping forward, air full of intimidation and anger.

Before Grant could respond, a nurse stepped through the door, eyes on a clipboard. She looked up and glanced between the two men warily. “Everything okay in here?” she asked carefully.

“Yeah, sorry, we are just a bit hot headed right now. My kid is in surgery, I’m a bit keyed up” Grant smiled sweetly at the nurse. She nodded knowingly back, walking over to begin her assessment of him.

Tonys blood curled. How dare Grant call Peter *his* kid. He was nothing. No one.

He staggered out of the room, walking until his feet brought him to the desk again.

“Any progress?” he asked, grateful the lady was the same as before. “Sorry honey, nothing yet”

He smiled tightly before walking further until he felt the cool breeze of the outside air hit his face. He leant against the wall, finally letting the past few minutes sink in.

Why had Grant acted out like that? Why the change? Was he just stressed out like Tony?

The thoughts jumped in and out of his mind, confused and concerned.

He felt like he was missing something here.

Tony almost jumped out of his skin when the suit landed gracefully next to him on the side of the building. He quickly glanced around to see no one was around him. “Talk to me FRI, what did you find?”

“No signs of the attackers, boss, but I did find the place where I believe Peter and Mr. Bates were being held. A cabin just under a mile from where you found Peter. I found evidence of assault and battery” her words are clipped and not for the first time does he wonder how JARVIS would have sounded delivering the same news.

“That’s a start. Can you start a file up with the locations so I can give it all to the authorities”

“Do you want to me call the local station?” She asks. He thinks for a moment. Suddenly unsure.

“Yeah let’s get that call through, let them know everything we know. I want those bastards heads on a stick”

He says the words because he’s had that thought before, but they don’t have the same heat as before. His mind is confused, disorientated, not something he is used to. He tries to shake it off, but it sticks.

“Send this suit home FRI, I’ll get my hands on a phone and connect back up with you for updates”

She doesn’t respond, the suit shoots up into the sky before disappearing into the clouds. Tony thuds his head back against the brick wall. He had never felt such a turmoil of emotions before.

Taking a few more moments, he steps back inside, finding the same nurse as before. “Anything?” she looks at him sadly. “They are working very hard on your son” is all she offers.

He takes it and sits on a chair, his head pressed into his hands.

Waves of guilt, shame, anger, sadness, confusion roll through him thickly. He held onto the reflex to name drop himself and get the answers he wanted. But he knew the professionals were doing what they could. Peter was a child. He wouldn’t be treated any differently if he were related to a billionaire. And right now, Tony was no superhero.

He was a dad. A dad who had just lost his world.

...

When May arrives, she brings a hurricane.

She was just as much of a mess as he is, and they make quite the pair as she falls into his arms, sobs shaking her small body.

“Have they said anything?” she rasps, out of breath and panicked.

“Last time I checked in they said they had stabilised most of the worst injuries, they were moving on to the less pressing matters” he says into her hair, her fingers still gripping him tightly feeling as she sobs into his neck.

“Peters strong May, he can do this” he reassures. In the hour sitting in the uncomfortable chair, he had repeated that to himself too many times to count, desperate to reassure himself.

She nods and pulls back, her face red and tear stained. “How are you holding up” she asks, warm hands pressing into his cheek.

“Don’t worry about me” he says, placing his own hand over hers.

Her eyes tighten, “You better not be blaming yourself. There’s nothing you could have done to prevent this. You got to him when he called. You saved his life” she says with so much conviction he almost believes her.

He just hums, knowing his voice wasn’t strong enough to respond how she wanted him to.

“Did they put Grant into a room?” he hears her say.

Clearing his throat, he readies himself to talk about Grant, about his strange behaviour. But he can see the thin lines of worry she holds for her partner, and he makes the decision to leave it for now. He will bring it up later.

They walk in silence to where Grant was still lying, this time the T.V is off, and he sits quietly looking out the window. Tony clenches his teeth to hold back any remarks he wants to make.

As soon as Grant sees them he leaps out of bed, wincing outwardly before moving to the pair. He pulls May into his arms tightly. "May. I'm so sorry, I'm sorry I couldn't protect Peter, this is all my fault" he moans into her shoulder.

Tony grimaces, a small flicker of pity ignites and disintegrates immediately.

"It's okay, he's okay now" she whispers, hugging him back gently.

They move towards the bed again, sitting down to talk about Grant's injuries. Tony hovering awkwardly in the door.

"What's being done to find these guys?" May questions, her teary eyes flicking to Tony's.

"I have the police searching the forest. The suit did a scan and found what looks to be the place you were held in, so I sent the location for them to check out too" he says watching as Grant's sad eyes turn dark with anger.

"I told you *not* to go to the police! What have you done?" He seethes.

Tony puts his hands up in front of him, sensing Grant was about to pounce. "Grant, I told you we need to get these guys fast, before they disappear" he reasons, feeling like he's already had this conversation.

May scrunches up her face, turning to Grant. "This is good Grant, they might find the guys who hurt you both... and if they found the place they kept you, there will be evidence that might catch them" she sounds reassuring but she has a hint of confusion now. At least her and Tony are on the same page with this one.

Grants face is stormy, and there's something else sitting there that Tony can't quite put his finger on.

The conversation is stopped quickly by the nurse that Tony has been harassing stepping towards the room, her face calmer than the last time Tony had checked in with her. "He's out of surgery. Room 381. He made it through" she smiles, hand coming up to rub Tonys arm.

A breath Tony didn't realise he was holding comes out, a whimper too. He spins to look at May, her face lighting up just as much.

"Can we see him?" She asks, quickly standing up to move next to Tony.

"Sure can, he's still under but the doctors will come to the room again shortly, they will want to discuss with you both his condition"

They nod and move quickly down the hall, Grant trailing behind. He tries not to think of that angry look on his face but it's all he sees when he glances back at him.

*Strange.*

They make it to the room. An air of dread settles over Tony. He hesitates before entering the room. They all do.

May grips onto his hand, hers is shaking. His is too.

They step in together, and Tony is grateful they are holding on to each other, because if they weren't, he would have fallen to the floor with how weak his legs become as he lays eyes on the boy.

Peter is like a ghost in the bed. Skin as pale as the sheets, looking as small as someone half his age.

His body has been cleaned of the blood and dirt, but replaced with bandages upon bandages. Covering almost all of the skin that can be seen above the gown and sheets. His face is heavily bruised, black and blue. Wiring and tubing juts out of his frail form.

Tony doesn't even recognise him.

"My baby!" May wails. It's heart breaking and gut wrenching. She lets go of Tonys hand and falls to the floor beside the bed. Tony moves to comfort her but is stopped by a meaty hand on his shoulder.

Grant sends him a sharp look before moving in front to kneel next to May, whispering into her ear and patting her back.

Tony can't even think about the action. All he sees is Peter lying in that bed. Its better and so much worse than what he had seen out in the woods when he had found him.

Here every injury is highlighted, the light of the room showing how gaunt and small he looks.

Tony feels his own wail sitting high in his throat. He wants nothing more than to throw something, punch someone. His finger itch with the need for revenge. Every cell in his body wants blood. Blood for what has been done to his child.

A soft knock interrupts Tonys murderous thoughts, a man with a grim expression steps into the room. "Are you the family of Peter?" He asks softly. Tony moves to respond, but he feels as though it may not be his place to be here. He shoots May a look, trying to hide his emotions and let her decide.

"Yes" she sniffs, wiping her eyes roughly and moving to stand and face the newcomer.

Grant visibly tenses and goes to speak, but May interrupts "We all are" she says with no room for discussion.

The doctor eyes the three of them for a moment before sighing. "You might want to take a seat. We have a lot to get through" he says sympathetically, motioning to the couch in the corner of the room. Grant and May sit down, but Tony chooses to stand, leaning on the wall beside the sofa.

The doctor takes a seat on a chair facing the trio, visibly taking a deep breath before commencing.



“Peter was in a very bad way when he got him. His heart had stopped due to the very aggressive infections in his blood stream. We have done a very heavy blood transfusion to try to drain this infection out, as well as cleaning the injuries as much as possible. Peter is very lucky he came when he did, otherwise he might not have made it through” he pauses to allow this information to settle within the group. May shakes but remains stony, set to see this interaction through.

Tony can feel each word bounce around his head. His mind racing with the implications of the words, with the math of how much blood would have been used, the time it takes for an infection to set that bad.

“He has sustained 3<sup>rd</sup> degree burns to 15% of his body on the right side. We were able to complete some skin grafts on the worst areas, but the other portions will need time to heal. I am afraid he will most likely carry these scars for a long time”

Scars were the least of their worries. Physical ones any way.

“Peter has also broken quite a few bones which we have set, although I did notice that some bones had been broken before and had not healed correctly prior to this occasion... has Peter had a history of injuries that would explain this?” He questions, there’s a glint to his eye that Tony recognises. He had seen that same expression on doctors when he was just a child himself. His stomach rolls angrily.

But he knew Peter had broken a bone or two out as Spiderman, had come to Tony on more than one occasion because he was too squeamish to set it himself.

May nods her head, also knowing of Peter’s patrol injuries “Yeah, he taken some pretty bad falls, here and there...” she starts, Grant finishes for her with a “he can be quite clumsy.”

Something about those words bring a shiver down Tony’s spine. He had heard those words too before. He hadn’t heard them for decades. But you never do forget.

The doctor considers them all before continuing “Okay. Well, he has been obviously assaulted repeatedly, thankfully the only internal injury from the blunt force trauma was swelling on his kidney, which we were able to salvage. The multiple contusions on his back and wrists which were some of the worst affected by infection are stabilised and stitched up, and should heal nicely...”

Multiple contusions on his back. He was whipped. Someone held this child down and whipped

him. Tony feels sick. His stomach knots and twists, vomit desperate to come out. He holds it down. He needs to finish this.

“Now this is where it gets hard.” The doctor pauses. He removes his glasses and wipes his brow. His eyes shine in the light, his face barely hiding its emotion.

Tony already knows. He doesn’t want it to be true. He had desperately begged since he had seen Peter that it wasn’t true. His whole body feels weak as the doctor opens his mouth again.

“There is evidence of sexual assault.” He says, it comes out blunt but riddled with compassion. May lets out a sob, her hand flying to her mouth. Tony’s legs give and he finds himself sliding down the wall to the floor, head dropping back to look to the roof.

Tears gather in his eyes. Peter had been hurt in the worst of ways. The bastard didn’t just stop with fists and hits. He had to destroy this teenager. This pure, innocent teenager.

It feels as though his world is tearing apart around him.

“I know this is difficult to hear. Believe me, I know. But Peter is going to need you. We have stitched up all the internal sutures, and we set the dislocated pelvis, however, he will have a lot of difficulty with this type of injury. It is a very humiliating injury to endure, and given Peters other injuries he will need *a lot* of support.”

They hurt him so badly they had torn and broken him. Tony lets out a sob of his own. It’s quiet enough to go unnoticed, but he feels it all over inside himself. Devastating waves crash through him, angry swell churning in his gut.

The doctor continues to talk, listing medications and procedures. But Tony can’t hear. They had beat him and then they violated him.

How could Peter get through this.

How could any of them?

He pushes himself up off the floor to lean against the wall weakly. The Doctor is saying his last words before departing from the makeshift family. Telling them to make Peter comfortable when he wakes up. To make him feel as safe as possible.

How could Tony ever convince Peter he was safe when people existed out there that could hurt him like this?

When the room is finally plunged into silence, bar the beeps of the machinery around Peters still form, Tony turns to the pair on the couch.

“We should move him to the tower, I can have the jet pick him up, we can do it before he wakes. I think he will feel safer there” he begins, already calculating the time it would take to execute, how long to army a team of the best medical professionals in the world to be by Peters bedside, how long it would take to army a literal army to tear apart anyone who ever laid a hand on his kid.

“He’s not going anywhere near your ivory tower” Grant spits. Its harsh enough for Mays head to snap up in shock, her face covered in her tears. “Grant...” She starts, but he cuts her off.

“Don’t you see May. This is all because of *him*. They took Peter to hurt *him*. This would have never have happened if he just stayed away. If he left us all alone!” He shouts, Tony flinches back.

“That’s not true Grant!” May sobs angrily, pushing away from him to stand near Tony. Grant stands all the same, stepping closer to Tony, invading his personal space.

“He will be safer at the tower. I have security- ”

“Bullshit. He will be safer anywhere but near you, you shouldn’t even be here. You aren’t family” he spits venomously.

Tony blanches, “As far as I’m concerned, that kid needs all the medical help and protection he deserves, and I have that all in the tower. From where I’m standing the only one not helping him is *you*” he bites back.

“And as far as *I’m* concerned” Grant takes a dangerous step closer to him.

“Peter was raped because of you”

Tony staggers back as if he had been hit. His own inner conflict shouts back its agreement with the words, his heart tells him to beat this bastard into next week.

“STOP” May shouts. “Both of you!”

“Where is this coming from? Peter is hurt, and all you can do is blame each other?” she questions, eyes hard and drained.

“As far as *I’m* concerned, there’s only one person to blame, and that’s the person who has hurt him. The person who hurt my baby- ” she breaks into a sob, hands coming over her face. Grant is a moment too slow to wrap his arms around her comfortingly, and Tony notices.

He’s noticing a lot of things.

When she finishes her burst of tears, she takes a deep breath. “We will wait here for now. These doctors will know what to do right now. When he’s awake we can ask him if he wants to move. If he does, we get him over to the tower, if he doesn’t we stay here. From here on Peter makes the decisions.” She asserts.

Tony holds back his argument to simply nod. She had the power here.

She nods her own head, to confirm her own decision. Grant sits down on the couch grouchy. Tony still can’t shake his feelings towards the man. He can’t explain the behaviour to paternal protective instincts anymore. This anger feels too directed... too out of place.

Tony subtly places a hand on May’s arm, and nods towards the door, she immediately gives him a watery smile and follows him into the corridor.

She immediately presses herself into his arms, clutching his shirt tightly. “Don’t listen to him, he’s just as affected by this. If not more because he had to see it” she says quietly.

Tony grits his teeth. “He seems very... angry” he says carefully.

“I think he is just blaming himself” she says softly.

“Pretty sure he’s blaming me” he quips back. She gives him a watery laugh. It feels out of place in this hell they have entered.

“He’s just, a lot more defensive than I expected... especially about the police” he says warily.

She glances up, her eyebrows knitting together. “You think there’s more to the story than he’s telling us?”

“I don’t know. I don’t know” he says honestly. He doesn’t.

“Okay, I’ll keep an eye on him. Might see if he will tell me more than what he told you and the doctors”

He smiles gratefully. “And the police will most likely swing through to get statements, it might shake him up a bit”

“Who? Grant or Peter?” she grimaces.

He shrugs, his mind still rising and falling with its thousand emotions.

“I think we also need to do what the doctor asked. Keep him comfortable, get some of his stuff from the apartment, make him feel safe. I know he will hate being in the gown, so his own clothes would be a good start” she muses.

“I can go back to the apartment now, that way he can have that stuff here by the time he wakes up” Tony offers.

May shakes her head “No, you should be here with him if he wakes sooner, I can send Grant when he is feeling better”

Tony shakes his own head “I’ll swing by the tower and get my own things, I came empty handed when I got the call, so I need to pick up some things anyway, seriously May. If he wakes he will want you.”

She considers it for a moment before giving in. “Yeah, if you hurry we might both be here when he wakes” she smiles, pulling her keys from her pocket to hand him.

“It only took me about 40 minutes to get here, but mind you I broke just about every speeding law doing it”

“I’ll cover it” he says immediately. She smiles again. It doesn’t fit with her broken eyes and tired face. She still has a tremor in her body, and Tony can see the restlessness in her posture to get back to Peters bedside, he feels the same way. But he can do this one thing for her.

He walks to the car, thoughts spiralling out of control. The doctors words echoing in his head. Grants words echoing in his head. The shrill alarm of the panic button still ringing in his ears.

He staggers into the drivers seat once he locates the old mustang. Firing up the engine he begins to drive towards the city. Where he had found Peter was only about an hour from the city, the hospital even closer. A long distance from where the lodge was located. It was a thought that had been troubling Tony for a while now. Why move the duo so far from where they had been kidnapped? It didn’t really add up.

The drive is spent in his own head, picturing Peters injuries, seeing them in his mind the first time he laid eyes on him, and then with the diagnosis to match. He kept picturing Peter bound and afraid, beaten and abused in the worst ways. Desperately he clawed at his eyes trying to focus on the road ahead, not on the creativity of his cruel imagination.

Unsure how he had managed to avoid a road accident, he parks the car at the base of the apartment building. How many times had he and Peter sat in this spot after a great day. He could almost see Peters blinding smile from that time he had promised him the company. He could feel the phantom touch of Peters small hands hugging him tightly, so full of life and love.

Tony gets out of the car, slamming the door harder than necessary. He moves on autopilot to the apartment, unlocking the door and walking inside.

Immediately he is surrounded with Peter.

Photos of him smiling on the walls, his shoes left next to the door, a text book on the bookcase, his most recent achievement grade on the fridge. Tony feels his heart clench, his eyes dampening warningly. This kid deserved the world and what did the world give him in return? Pain and suffering.

Does it get any worse?

He braces himself before stepping into Peters room. He falls to the bed, head dropping into his hands trying pitifully to not lose himself to his grief.

Rubbing his eyes violently, he stands up. He needs to get a grip. Now.

Puffing out his breath, he pulls a backpack from the floor, looking around the room for things that he knew would make Peter feel better. He spots Peters phone under his pillow and picks it up with a frown. Peter hadn't taken his phone on the trip? That was unlike him.

He tries to turn it on but finds it flat. Maybe the kid got a new phone?

Nevertheless, he deposits it into the bag, pulling the charger out of the wall and shoving it alongside a pair of earphones.

He spins around again, finding a clearly worn book, paged folded and bookmark hanging out the top. He places it into the bag. He finds a few more novelty kind of things and places them into the bag, things he thinks will keep Peters mind off his injuries. He makes a mental note to pick up some old research papers he never published from the lab that Peter always found joy out of critiquing.

Keep the kids mind sharp. That was always key to stopping depression post trauma.

Happy with the items he finds, he begins to shove clothes in the bag. Finding pyjamas under the pillows, and his favourite hoody placed over the chair.

He had a lot of the clothes at the tower, so this would suffice until the move, which shouldn't be too long away.

He goes to leave the room, bag gripped tightly. A sudden memory fills his mind.

*“why are you wearing that old shirt Pete? It looks older than you” Tony laughs, watching Peter walk in, wearing a flannelette shirt 3 sizes too big for him, frayed and worn. His smile drops slightly seeing the hard lines on Peters face, he brings his hands up to his face and begins to cry quietly. Tony drops everything in his hands and rushes over.*

*“Hey what’s wrong? The shirts great, practically Channel, is it designer? I love it! Sorry for being a dick” he quickly amends, pulling Peters shaking form into his arms.*

*Peter gives a watery laugh and sniffs back his tears a fraction. “No, it’s a bad shirt, I know. It was Bens” he says quietly.*

*Now Tony really feels like an ass.*

*“Oh, I’m sorry kid, I didn’t mean - ” he starts. “Don’t be sorry, I just wear this shirt when I’m having a bad day” Peter says softly, almost so Tony doesn’t hear.*

*“A bad day?” He asks carefully.*

*“Yeah, I get kind of sad sometimes, just with everything” his hand flaps around in the air as if to explain what the everything means.*

*Tony knows what it means. His bad day shirt was an old dirty rag that sat up in the tallest shelf. Only brought down for emergencies. When a bad day came, he held onto the rag. When he first got it, it was beautiful and ivory, embroidered at the bottom – ‘one day you will change the world, just make sure you clean up after it’. A gift from Jarvis, the real Jarvis, after he completed his first circuit board.*

*He nods and pulls the kid onto the couch, FRIDAY already turning off any distractions that might break the moment. Peter sits quietly, playing with the hem of the shirt before spilling out every detail of his torment. A mugger, and old man, Peter almost not being fast enough. Why wasn’t he faster for Ben?*

*Tony sits through it quietly, only offering sounds of his listening as Peter got everything off his*



*chest. He takes in Peters bloodshot eyes and quivering hands. The more he talks, the less pale he looks, his eyes beginning to twinkle towards the end.*

*Tony takes his hand, reminds him that everything happens for a reason, and Ben would be proud that he saved that mans life today.*

*It takes a while but eventually all the sadness seeps from Peters eyes, and he takes his first breath without its shudder.*

Peter was going to have some bad days soon. The shirt might actually help, he decides.

Turning back into the room, he opens the cupboard doors, flicking through the hangers until he finds the shirt tucked away towards the end of the line. He pulls it off and folds in neatly into the bag. He goes to shut the door when something catches his eye.

Sitting in the corner almost hidden, a bag. Suddenly curious for some unknown reason, Tony drops down, reaching in for the bag. His hands brush over a folded piece of paper, and he pulls the two items out in front of him into the light.

Standing up, he places the heavy trash bag of clothes on the bed, eyes focus on the paper.

Opening the letter carefully he feels slightly guilty for prying into Peters privacy.

And then he begins to read.

*Tony.*

*If you are reading this, I assume I'm already gone. I am so sorry for the hurt this will cause you and May, but please find it in your heart to forgive me and help me now.*

*Grant has done this. Even if he tells you otherwise, it was him.*

The letter almost drops from his hand. His mouth drops in shock, heart in his throat.

His eyes scan over the rest of the letter, reading Peters goodbye. He feels the terror begin to rise in his stomach. With panicked hands he reaches for the bag, tipping its contents over the bed. Clothes pile on top of each other, each splattered with blood. Tony feels cold all over.

How had he not noticed?

A flash-drive catches his attention, and he moves to grasp it, moving clothes out of the way to reach it, but just before he does, his hand stops on a piece of cloth he was about to move.

Underwear.

His stomach drops impossibly low. Heart rate spiking, a sob catching in his throat. He almost collapses, overcome with anguish.

And then he remembers.

Grant was still with Peter.

“FRIDAY! Send the authorities to the hospital NOW” He yells, backpack slung over his shoulder, letter tightly gripped in his fist as he runs through the apartment.

“FRIDAY” He yells again over the silence.

He taps his fingers to his ear. “Fuck!” he yells, realising he had no communication devices on him.

He whirls around the apartment, looking for a phone, a computer – finding nothing. A growl tears from his throat, wild and feral.

Tearing down the steps as fast as he could, Tony jumps behind the wheel, speeding out of the street as fast as the old car could take him.

Sweat and tears were collecting on his face, he was so helpless, useless.

How could he have been so stupid.

He knew all this time something had been off about Grant, and then the behaviour at the hospital... it was all adding up.

Everything was slipping into place. Misplaced bruises that Peter would dismiss... the quiet moods, the personality changes, the fear on his face when he had to leave...

The goodbye on the rooftop.

Tony slammed his fist on the top of the steering wheel. How could he have missed this. Why did he not notice sooner?

The hot angry rush of blood was pumping rapidly through his veins, he could almost feel their decent through his body... furiously weaving in and out. His heart was in a vice grip, lungs wheezing with the imminent panic.

He was Tony fucking Stark, he shouldn't have missed this.

What if we was too late now?

Merging in and out of the traffic, ignoring the horns and expletives thrown out of cars, he broke every law possible. Peter was in danger. Nothing else mattered.

The drive takes half the time it did on the way to the city, his speed never going below 90 as he wove in and out dangerously through cars and people.

He had counted 82. 82 times he should have noticed something was wrong. Should have pushed harder on his gut instincts that had been bothering him for months. Should have stayed that day in the apartment when Grant attacked him.

Should have done so much more.

He doesn't even bother to turn off the engine, only throwing the car into park by the entrance and jumping out to run as fast as he could through the hospital corridors.

People in white coats and normal clothes shouted after him, yelling about his running and havoc.

Tony was underwater in panic. He couldn't hear them. He couldn't even form the words over his closed throat to explain or apologise.

Making it to Peters floor, he flew by the reception desk. The nurse stood with wide eyes as he approached, mouth opening to question. "Call the police. NOW! Peters in danger" he yelled, not stopping to see her reply.

He slid to a stop outside the door to Peters room, grabbing the handle and pushing in.

The door didn't budge.

Without hesitating, and feeling the cold terror wash through him, he slammed his shoulder into the wood, watching it crack under his weight. Running a few steps backwards, he threw his entire body at the door, falling through the now open frame.

His body worked before his mind did.

Grant was on top of the bed, not unlike the position he had been in when Tony had first found them, his hands encircling Peters throat. Peters eyes were wide and face purple, his body jerking harshly.

This time Tony didn't think twice.

He stormed to the bed, somehow his strength had doubled, allowing him to rip Grant off the shaking boy, throwing him to the floor furiously.

A thought passes through his mind quickly, of mothers lifting cars off their children. His paternal instincts were flaming through him.

He jumped down to Grants level, sending a punch down on his head.

“You sick son of a bitch!” Tony screamed. Sending another hit sailing down on the deranged mans face.

He saw red.

This monster had hurt his kid in ways he couldn’t describe. He had manipulated them all. He had almost killed Peter.

His fists were moving without his brains command, sending hit after hit. Words were coming out of his mouth that he didn’t recognise.

Screams of rage, every curse word he could think of, every descriptive of Grant he could conjure.

Hands were pulling him roughly, tearing him away from his prey.

He tried to fight them, tried to get back to Grant. He wanted him to pay, he wanted him to feel even a fraction of the pain he had caused Peter.

But the hands were stronger. He could see matching hands pull Grant away, he was limp and not fighting back.

Tonys eyes were still hazed, still clouded by his need to protect. To avenge.

“Tony?” the soft, wrecked voice cuts through his murderous thoughts like a blade. He stops resisting immediately.

He turns to the bed, eyes latch onto Peters terrified glazed ones.

He stumbles to the kneel beside the bed, body suddenly weak, but drawn to Peter like a magnet. The room is chaos, people shouting, the machines beeping loudly... but Tony only has eyes and ears for Peter. As if it were just the two of them in that room.

Peters head lolls on the pillow, his eyes are disorientated, lips blue and cracked, his frail hand reaches out to Tonys face.

Tony leans into the hand on his cheek, his tears stream down and gather in Peters fingers. His own hand reaches out to stroke Peters face back, Peter sucking in a breath as soon as his hand makes contact with the skin.

“You’re real? You’re here?” His voice weak and broken, eyes filling with tears.

Tony’s heart shatters even further, like glass in his chest, like shrapnel in his soul.

“I’m here Pete, you’re safe now I promise” he reassures, with a watery shaky smile.

“Grant – he-” Peter stutters, the machinery around him beeping more angrily.

“Hey, it’s okay, he’s gone now, he can’t hurt you anymore” he promises. He should have made that promise a long time ago.

Peter eyes dart over his face for a moment, his hand tightening its grip on Tony cheek, as if to remind himself that it was real. And then he closes his eyes and falls back to the pillow, the alarms ringing settle and resume their normal pitch.

Tony presses his head to the bed, his hands grip Peters cold ones in his own.

“Tony? What the hell just happened in here?” Mays panicked voice questions. She steps into the room, carefully manoeuvring herself around the collateral damage, pushing past the doctors crowding the space to be by the bed side, two coffees in her hands.

“It was Grant” he says muffled into the bedding.

“What was Grant? What are you talking about?” her voice getting more hysterical.

Tonys head snaps up off the bed, his hands tightening on Peters. “Your *boyfriend* has been beating Peter for months. *Months* May! And when that wasn’t enough, he went further. He fucking... he-” his voice cracks.

“He hurt Peter in the worst way”

The cups drop from Mays hands, splattering loudly on the floor. She raises her hands to her mouth, a sob ripped from her mouth.

She shakes her head, her eyes disbelieving. “He couldn’t have – he didn’t...” she begs.

“He played us all. He almost got away with it too” Tonys voice is cold, detached. Furious.

She cries into her hands, knees dropping to the floor, the coffee soaking her knees. She stays away from the bed. Maybe she knew she had failed Peter too. More than Tony. She had brought someone into her home and he had taken advantage of her own.

“I want him dead” she wails into her hands.

Tony couldn’t agree more.

...

When he finally catches his breath again, he walks into the corridor of the hospital. People eye him cautiously. It doesn’t bother him.

He steps up to the desk, the usual nurse stands to attention, “Mr. Parker, I don’t know how it

happened, we put him in a room and when we came back he was gone!” she frets backing away as she sees his eyes glimmer with fury.

“You let him get away?” He says slowly. Dangerously.

“He was unconscious, we didn’t- the police are on their way back now” she stutters.

“Back?” had they already been here?

“Yes, they had questioned Mr. Bates before the incident just now... I can assure you there was no reason to believe he would attack Peter like this, there are protocols...” she begins, but he doesn’t listen to the rest of the sentence.

Like a man on a mission, he storms to the car. His thoughts aren’t coherent anymore. Only revenge on his mind.

The keys are still in the ignition when he gets back into the car. He already knows exactly where Grant has gone. He knows.

He drives with his fists clenched so hard they turn white on the steering wheel. He can still feel the touch of Peters hands on his cheek, his cold, shaking hands as they checked to make sure he was real.

His foot pushes harder on the accelerator, the engine screeching as it accommodated his rage.

As soon as he sees the clearing in the trees, he swerves the car off the road, slamming it into park, and just like at the hospital, he leaves it running and open. There were more pressing things on his mind.

He runs through the forest, his eidetic memory replaying the flight from what felt like years ago, as he desperately searched for a sign of life, for a sign of Peter. He finds the exact spot he found him, where he had clung to the kids lifeless body.

He doesn’t stop.



He keeps running. His mind mapping the way from the coordinates FRIDAY had given all those hours ago.

He sees the smoke before he sees the cabin.

“Grant!” He yells, the crackle of the fire almost drowns it out. He feels the fire within him. Raging, slamming on his rib cage to be released.

He wonders if this is how Bruce felt.

Storming into the cabin, he almost staggers. The stench of blood and filth was so strong it almost made his eyes water. This is where he held Peter.

“Grant!” He screams again into the room. “Face me you coward!”

A sharp pain to the back of his head sends him crashing to the floor. He rolls over quickly to see Grant standing over him, fire poker raised. His face, below the heavy bruising, was manic. Insane.

The rod comes down again, Tony barely has the time to throw his arms up and block the next strike. He clamps his hands down on the metal, using the momentum to swing Grant down to the floor next to him.

He acts quickly, rolling on top of the man, hands encircling his throat. Grant rolls them over again, until he looms on top of Tony, his fist comes up and back down, landing with a crunch on Tonys face.

Tony yells in anger. He can’t feel the pain. Only the pain in his heart. He brings his knees up, kicking until he feels the pressure fall from his chest. They both move in sync to stand, blood smeared over both their faces.

“How could you do it! How could you hurt him! He’s just a kid!” Tony screams, his voice is enveloped in rage.

Grant smiles, his teeth stained in blood. “cried like a baby too” he laughs manically.

Tony tackles him to the ground, swinging his arms, landing satisfying hits before Grant makes his move again.

He throws Tony to the side, Tony hitting the floor painfully. A hand grabs onto his head, slamming it down onto the wood floors. Tony lets out a grunt as his vision begins to blur. He was too emotional to focus on fighting back. All he could see was blood splatters that weren't his, scratch marks that didn't match his nails.

The horrors that Peter had endured.

Grant was straddling his back now, slamming his head twice more into the floor. His large hands wrapped around Tony's neck, bringing his breathing to halt.

He flailed on the floor beneath the heavy body, grunting and whining as his oxygen was held at bay. His eyes felt like they were popping out of their sockets, his lungs screaming and demanding him to take a breath.

Grant leaned closer to his ear, Tony could almost hear the smile on his face despite the blood pumping in his ears.

“This is where I fucked him for the first time” he sneers.

Tony uses his last remaining strength to shove his arms back as hard as he can, dislodging Grant's grip. He scrambles to his knees catching his breath for a moment before charging at Grant's laughing form again.

He slams them into the wall, a cry spilling from his lips as all of his rage bubbles to the surface. His fist slams into Grant's cheek again, reverberating in the crack that reverberates in the room.

They dance around each other, throwing messy hits and kicks, ducking and slamming each other against furniture and walls.

Tony ends up pressed against a door frame, cheek pressed against the cold plywood. His eyes

glance into the room for a moment. He sees the bed. The bloody sheets. The handcuffs.

His growls sound animalistic. Feral.

He throws his body back until they both land on the floor. Everywhere he looks he can see Peters suffering. His nightmares.

Using his full body weight, he crashes Grant into a door, sending them both sailing through it, landing painfully on the cold wet ground of the woods.

Scrambling to stand up, they both wheeze and move around each other, both ready to strike.

“He screamed for you” Grant laughs. “Help me Tony! Save me!” he says, voice high pitched and mocking.

Tony lunges, sending them to the floor again. He can’t even form the words to reply to Grants taunts. All he can see and hear is Peter.

Grants strikes are powerful, staggering. Tony can feel himself start to weaken. His own hits becoming more messy and missing target. He was a goddamn superhero. And what was this man? Nothing but a piece of dirt.

But Grant wasn’t a father who had just lost part of his world.

He wasn’t weakened by emotions and grief.

A punch catches him off guard, another one seals the deal. He falls to the dirt, head smacking painfully on the floor.

Grant hobbles over him, clearly the fight taking its toll on him too. But he was still wearing that horrible blood-stained smile. That disgusting delighted glee in his eyes.

“How does it feel now I’ve broken your precious Peter?” he singsongs.

Tony spits out blood next to him “If you think you broke that boy, then you are a lot more stupid than I thought” he laughs harshly. “Peter is the strongest person I know, and no one, *no one* could break that kids spirit. Not even a disgusting excuse of a human like you”

Grant growls low in his throat, Tony uses the opportunity to stagger to his feet, swaying dangerously.

It happens too quickly. Quicker than Tony would have liked.

Grant lunges for him again, and Tony sidesteps the attack. Someone like Grant always let the words get to him. Let them direct his rage. Weaken his attack. Tony was strengthened by words.

Grant tries to catch himself but it’s too late. The momentum from the lunge sends him sailing into the fire, flames engulfing him immediately.

His screams follow a moment later. Shrill and ear piercing.

Tony falls to his knees, watching through the blood in his eyes as the figure in the flames moves helplessly, begs for life.

The screams eventually stop and Tony is left in the eerie silence.

His eyes never leave the burning orange flame. Watching it spit and crackle in the cool breeze of the evening.

He tries to find it in himself to feel remorse for the loss of a human.

But Grant was never a human.

Grant was a void. A soul sucking parasite that came and took what he wanted. And he wanted Peter.

The flames burn and singe, until they begin to flicker out, dying from the lack of attention. Or maybe they had got what they came for.

Finally fulfilled by taking the devil back home.

## Chapter End Notes

And so it goes. The ending you were all hoping for. Im not THAT cruel i'd kill our beans off! Or am i? One chapter to go :) :) :)

As always - your comments and kudos mean the absolute world!

And come round to [ironwebbs.tumblr.com](http://ironwebbs.tumblr.com) - I answer all the pressing questions, reply with tastless gifs to your sad responses to the chapters and give a few inside stories into the chapter/ my writing process! Come round, send me hate or love or pictures of your dogs idc I love you all.

See you next chapter for the big finale

# Chapter 10

## Chapter Notes

And so we come to a close! Here is the final chapter!

TW- attempted suicide/suicidal ideation

Thank you all for sticking through this story with me. Hope you enjoy

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Peter was terrified to open his eyes.

He could hear voices around him, coming and going. Soft and muffled. His brain begged him to see, to answer the question that had been ricocheting in his head for the past hour.

Was he safe?

Or was it all just his mind playing tricks again. The drugs deceit in making him think it was over.

The last time he had opened his eyes, Grant had been there.

He had told him that he wasn't going to let them take Peter away from him. That he was the one that was to end it all.

*Had Tony been real?*

His curiosity eventually gets the better of him, eyes cracking open slightly to the brightened room. The steady beeping of the machines comforts him somewhat. Different from silence he had been surrounded by for so long.

Looking in front of him, he can see a woman curled into a ball on the couch, a blanket draped across her sleeping form.

*May.*

His heart begins to beat harder, faster. He never wanted May to see him like this. He had tried to protect her for so long. Keep her from having this on her conscience.

But he also wants to be in her arms like he never has before.

He wants to cry and scream and let her hold him in her warm embrace until he can breathe again.

Peter moves to reach out to her, his arm jerking with the movement. Looking down he can see the tubes running through him. His senses take that opportunity to dial into the feeling of liquid slipping through his veins, the steady pump of the IV, *the drugs effects*.

All of a sudden, he is back on that dirty mattress, the drugged drink coursing through his body. The shadows creeping up on him, the squeak of the floor boards as Grant moved closer to the bed, belt unbuckling...

He feels himself hit the cold floor, his hands grappling for the tubes attached to him, tearing them out with a sob of pain. He scrambles until his back hits the corner, watching as the shadows and Grant moved closer to him.

He couldn't do this again. *He thought he was safe.*

Grant stands over him, reaches out to grab him, cold hands wrapping around Peters arms. Ready to bring the pain that always came with his presence.

Peter screams.

His legs kick out, the pain of the movements lost on his terrified mind.

He hits flesh as hard as he can, pushing Grant away from him. More shadows come towards him, reach for him.

Peter brings his arms out defensively, tries in vain to protect himself, even though Grant would always win.

The hands hold tighter, the voices yell louder, but he can't hear what they are saying.

Everything stops all at once. The touches, the shouted words, the shadows leaking around him.

And everything comes to focus on a single sound.

"You're safe, You're okay. You're safe Peter. You're not *there* anymore" it's whispered and gentle, immediately calming his mind and blanketing him in protection.

He dares to open his eyes, the room blurry and tilting around him. But Tonys face is a constant. It grounds him, focuses his mind, brings his slamming heart to a steady rhythm.

"Real?" he chokes out. His voice is as dry as his bone, cracked and strained with only a single word.

"Real." Tony reassures. His hands cup Peters face, as if he could read Peters thoughts, like he knew that dream Tony never touched, never laid his warm hands on Peters trembling dying body in the godforsaken nightmare.

Peter grits his teeth, a whined sob trapped in his mouth. He pitches himself forward without thinking, Tony catching his shaking body immediately. Tears cascade down his face, leaving hot wet trails on his cheeks to gather and soak in Tonys shoulder.

Tony was here. Only Tony.

He tries to hold in his sobs of relief, of pain, but he's too weak. They come out slow, and then all at once. Wrenched sobs, loud and pained, breath hitching and heaving as he clings on to Tony for dear life.

He can hear Tonys cracked voice whispering reassurances into his ear, telling him he was okay, he survived, it was over.



Peter can feel his body weakening, his eyes drooping heavily. He was terrified to fall asleep. What if he fell asleep to wake up back in that hell? Or to Grant hovering over him again, hands wrapped around his throat? What if the drugs were back inside of him? Drowning his veins?

He uses his last ounce of strength to grip Tony tighter “Please – Please don’t make me go back, don’t let them take me back” he cries. Tony holds back just as tight “You aren’t going anywhere kiddo, I promise. I’ve got you now” his voice shakes despite the strength of his words.

Tony never breaks his promises and Peter knows he can believe him. So he stops fighting the drooping of his eyes, and trusts Tony to catch him as he falls.

. . .

The next time he wakes up, he’s back in bed. For a moment his mind tricks him to thinking he’s back on *that* bed. He sits up quickly, wincing at the pull on his sore muscles, immediately replaced with a fog of painlessness. He glances up, following the line from his arm to the bag hanging above the bed.

*Morphine.*

His goes to rip the IV out again, desperate to stop this never-ending cycle of drugs meddling with his thoughts and reality, but he’s stopped by a strong hand gently placing itself over his own.

“Gotta keep that in kid” Tony chides.

Peter blinks slowly, trying to focus his eyes on Tonys form, sitting on a chair beside the bed, his hand still covering Peters. Anchoring him.

“You came fo’ me” Peter whispers, mouth dry and stiff, emotions clawing up his throat as he pushes his hand into the warmth of Tonys palm.

“I told you I would always come when you needed me Pete” Tony replies gently, his own voice tightened with sadness.

He's petrified to think he's saved again. The last time had only been a trap.

But now, with Tony gripping his hand back just as tightly, his eyes full of unshed tears, Peter starts to feel more safe than he ever had.

"Is Grant - " he tries to ask, a fear prickling under his skin at the mere thought of Grant coming back for him.

"He won't be coming near you ever again." Tony says with sharp conviction. Peter releases the last breath he was holding, a sob catching with it. Tony squeezes Peters hand gently, and Peter fights back the tears rising in his eyes. He isn't successful. As soon as one escapes his eye, the rest follow suit. His lip quivers as he cries silently this time. Gripping onto Tonys hand with all his strength. Which there isn't much of.

Once his tears begin to reside, his eyes scan over Tonys face. For the first time noticing that it's black and blue, cut and scraped in places, butterfly bandages holding the worst of it.

Peters eyebrows crease in concern. "What happen' to your face?" he stumbles, alarmed. Had Grant attacked Tony too?

"Nothing you need to worry about kid" Tony says quietly, turning his face slightly away from Peters studying eyes. Peter moves his hand to reach out, but feels it jerk awkwardly with the cords and bandaging wrapped around it.

Suddenly remembering his earlier panic, he moves for it again, wanting it gone. Tony quickly stops him again, hand covering the entry points. Peter needs to be sure though. Needs to know this isn't just a drug fuelled hallucination like all those other times Tony had told him he was safe in the cabin.

"Don't wan' it" Peter mumbles desperately. "Wan' it to be real"

Tonys eyes soften with understanding. "It is real Pete. The morphine is just for the pain, that's it"

It almost calms Peter down slightly, but he can still feel the groggy fog settling around his mind. He wants it gone. He was sick of feeling hopeless, helpless. Shaking his head weakly he gripped

the tubes tighter, pulling before Tonys hand clamped down again harder.

“Pete” he says gently.

“Wan’ it to be real” Peter says again, his mouth suddenly feeling as though it was stuffed with cotton. The same feeling that Grants drinks had brought. His hands begin to tremble, clawing at Tonys grip over the tubing.

“*Please*” Peter whimpers brokenly. Tonys eyes shift slightly, he takes a slow breath as if to steady himself.

“I know he kept you drugged Pete, but this isn’t the same. You will be in pain if it’s out” he tries to reason.

Peter wanted the pain. The pain meant it was real.

He nods his head, eyes boring into Tonys. The fog felt heavier, suffocating.

“Please” he says again weakly.

Something breaks in Tonys face. He hesitates only for a moment before nodding. “Okay kiddo. I’ll get the doctor in here okay? He needs to do it properly. Don’t go ripping it out yourself okay? We had a nasty clean up the last time. Don’t need to repeat that”

Last time?

The memory hits all at once. The fear, the panic. Ripping the IVs out. Sobbing into Tonys arms. He has half a mind to feel embarrassed. The other reminds him that it’s the drugs making him weak. Making him break down. He just needed his strength back.

He drops his hand away from his arm, clenching his fists to stop the irate need to tear it away. “Thank you” he says around the tension in his throat.

Tony stands and moves to the doorway. Peter can hear the hushed conversation, waves of sentences understood. “Kid was drugged for a week, of course he wants to be off it” That was Tony. “He will be in agony! Hasn’t he been through enough?” A stranger now. Probably a doctor.

He drops his head back on the pillow. Waiting for his fate.

If they didn’t take it out he would just have to do it himself. He glances down to his arm, where the needles disappear under his skin. Several inches higher, a cut with surgical stitches that Peter didn’t recognise.

He looks up blearily to see Tony beside another man. A tremble runs through his body before he covers it up. Confusing himself at his own reaction to this stranger.

“Peter, how are you feeling?” The doctor asks kindly, adjusting himself to lean over Peters cowering body, pen light at the ready.

“M’fine” Peter grits out, trying to stop his own bodies reflex to jerk away and protect itself. The sooner he got the drugs away the sooner he would stop being so terrified, he was sure of that.

“So I understand you want to stop the morphine. Peter, the morphine is helping you to not be in pain. If I take this out, you will hurt very bad... It is against my recommendation. If we can leave it in for just a few more days...” he begins, but Peter cuts him off, hearing enough.

“Want it out now” he says shortly. His eyes are pleading, body tense as he hides his shivering. He was scared. Terrified to be in pain again. He remembered the horrible feeling of each injury rolling through him. But the disgusting slick of the drugs was always worse. Always meant he couldn’t defend himself. Always meant he was letting people take advantage of him.

The doctor sighs, pinching the bridge of his nose, fighting his own internal battle.

“What’s going on here?” a soft voice asks. Peter recognises it immediately.

He turns to the door. May standing in the doorway of the room. Her eyes lock with Peters wide ones. Immediately she stands up straighter. “Peter? You’re awake! Why did nobody...” she throws a quick glance towards Tony and the doctor, a flicker of betrayal crosses her face before she schools it and hurries towards the bed.

She wraps her arms around Peters shivering body, Peter melting into the embrace. “*Baby*” is all she says, gripping him tighter. He winces at the pressure, but it helps him to focus on her. On her warmth, comfort, distress. The latter brings a roll of displeasure to his stomach. He had done that. It was his fault she was upset. “M’okay” he mumbles into her hair, trying his best to reassure her. She sniffs back her sobs, pulling away to stare at him sadly.

“He’s only just woken May” Tony says gently, “And he wants us to take away the morphine”

She looks between Tony and Peter with disbelief. “Peter! Absolutely not!” she says quickly, cupping Peter face in her hands. “Sweetie, it’s helping you, why do you not want that?”

He feels ashamed all of a sudden, he knows he is making her more upset. “I don’t want it” he says weakly.

“But you need it. This isn’t up for discussion” she says with a glare at the two men beside the bed. Peter looks desperately at Tony, hoping Tony could say what he was too embarrassed to admit to himself.

Tony sees and looks back pleadingly at Peter before giving in himself “May, you have to let him make his own choice here. If that’s what he wants, then we need to listen to him” he says passively.

She looks at him as though he had grown a second head, eyes wild as she looks into Peters. “You are just freaked out Peter, it’s okay. You keep the IV in and soon enough you will see...”

Anger bubbles up inside him, hot and feral. “Then you’re just like *him*!” he burst out loudly, everybody in the room jerking back in surprise. He regrets it immediately as he sees her face crumble, her hand coming up to cover her mouth as tears gather in her eyes. “May I’m- ” he stutters, burning anger turning quickly into burning shame. “I just don’t want to be drugged anymore” he says quietly, eyes downcast.

He had made her more upset. He had just wanted to be strong again, strong for her, strong for Tony.

Tony hesitates before resting a hand on Peters shoulder, “If that’s what you want” he says slowly, as if afraid that Peter would lash out again. Peter nods gratefully, and Tonys tenses his jaw before

looking over to the doctor.

“Mrs Parker, as Peter is a minor, I need your consent...” the doctors voice cautious, studying the three of them. Peter looks to May, his eyes begging her to understand.

She stares back at him, her own eyes pleading for him to understand her side. But eventually she concedes. Simply nodding her head. Peter brings his head down to her shoulder, sighing in relief. Everything was going to be okay now.

He feels the movements around his arm, the sick slide as the needle is removed.

“Thank you, *Thank you*” he whispers into Mays neck.

She shakes with her own quiet sobs and she holds him by the back of his neck. It was worth it this time. He knows he made her upset, but soon he will be able to work harder to keep her from getting more distressed. He could conceal his emotions better. Not be so on edge.

“I’m so glad you’re safe honey” she murmurs back. “I’m so, so sorry that I’ve put you through this” she says, quieter now, voice dripping with guilt.

Peter pulls back immediately, holding her at arms length “What? No May, you have nothing to be sorry for!” he says quickly, head already clearing, his own guilt heightening.

“I do! I brought him into our home, he hurt you Peter and I didn’t notice! I can never forgive myself for that” she trails off wetly. “He just had a breakdown May, there’s nothing you could have done, it only happened when we were at the cabin” he tries to amend, tries to soften her pain.

She looks up, eyes wet and strained. “I know about the abuse at the house. God Peter, how did you go through that alone!”

Peter jerks his head towards Tony accusingly. “I asked you not to tell her about that!” he stutters. Tony raises his eyebrows, “kid, how could I not! Look at where you are right now!”

Peter clenches his eyes closed, fists white with how tight he was holding them. He didn’t want

May to know about the months of suffering. Having her know just about the past week was bad enough... he couldn't put her through more.

"I'm okay May, I promise" he says, weaker now. Voice much less convincing, even to his own ears.

"You don't have to pretend anymore kiddo" Tonys gentle voice closer now.

"Why don't we let you rest for a bit Peter, I'm sure the last hour has been very extraneous for you. When I come back we can go over some things I'd like to discuss with you regarding your treatment, how does that sound?" The doctor interjects, seeing the distress and the toll of the conversation on Peters face. He is grateful for the escape, nodding his head as he slips down to lay on the bed.

May and Tony both give him their goodbyes, before the three step out into the hallway, closing the door behind them. Peter thinks he should listen in to the conversation, it was about him after all. But he was exhausted. The pain slowly creeping up on him the quicker his body metabolised the wearing off drugs. He closes his eyes slipping into the welcomed darkness behind his eyelids.

...

When Peter wakes again, he feels as though he's been run over by a truck. *Twice.*

The pain rolls through him, hot and angry, burning and searing. The burns are the first to make themselves known, and the broken bones follow close behind.

He throws his head back and groans, gripping onto the sheets until he can control his harsh breathing again. He wanted this, he reminds himself. This was his choice.

Steadying himself and letting his body adjust to the pain, he notes it's dark now. He looks around to find May and Tony, finally spotting them talking in the corridor with the doctor again. He groans again as he sits up, desperately sick of lying down.

The movement catches the eyes of his guardians, and they come into the room quickly, May taking

her seat beside the bed, Tony choosing to stand.

“How are you feeling Peter?” May asks concerned, probably from his pale shaking state.

The doctor, sharing her concerns moves around the bed checking the machines and placing a hand on Peters sweaty head. He hums disapprovingly before stepping back to write on his clipboard.

“I’m fine, it’s just a bit sore” Peter mumbles stubbornly, his head so much clearer now. The most clear it’s been in days... maybe weeks.

“I bet it is. If you change your mind about the pain medication, please let me know. It’s going to get worse before it gets better” the doctor says as he sits down on the chair on the opposite side of the bed to May and Tony.

“Now Peter. I want to go through some of your injuries, give you a run down on what we have been able to do, and what you are going to have to do, does that sound alright to you?”

Peter nods his head, shifting to be in a better seated position, hands clenching to mask his pain. He still wasn’t healing, which was somewhat terrifying.

“The worst of the injuries we have stabilised, but you’re going to have to have some PT when it comes to walking again with your broken ankle. Nothing too hard, just want to keep the strength up. You will be off your feet for a couple of weeks with that one”

The last time Peter had broken a bone it had lasted 1 week, but he was able to walk on it in 3 days. He’s not so sure he will have the same luck this time.

“Now as for the wounds on your back, we are going to need to redress those every couple of hours along with the burns to your side. I can have some nurses come in to help with that, it might be a little painful, given you are going in without any aid, but we will try to make you as comfortable as possible”

Peter nods again. Suddenly more aware of how long this recovery might take. How long he was going to be stuck in a bed again. *From one to another* he thinks bitterly.



“You mentioned you were given substances in your captivity. Can you tell me what kind of effects they had on you? Your toxicology came back mostly clean when you got here so we were unable to pinpoint what exactly was given to you”

Peter closes his eyes, not wanting to relive the pain of those drinks again. He takes a breath nonetheless and begins his descriptions “It was some sort of muscle relaxer and hallucinogen. It made me slow and sluggish, but also made me see things that weren’t there” his eyes dart to Tonys accidentally, and Tonys brow creases in response.

The doctor frowns as he writes more notes down “And how long would you say you were given this substance?” Peter doesn’t filter his words, too caught up in thinking about the shadows and the darkness. “A few months” he replies back. The hitch of breath beside him lets him know what he’s said, and his cheeks heat with embarrassment.

“That son of a bitch drugged you before this?” Tony growls lowly. Peter shrinks back. *Stupid* he thinks. He doesn’t want them to know all of this. May has her head in her hands, her shoulders sagged and breathing harsh.

“Only a few times... it wasn’t as bad...” he tries to reason, but it falls on deaf ears. Tony already looking murderous, the doctors face softening in sympathy.

May looks up suddenly, her eyes red and swollen.

“Peter. That time ... with the alcohol ...” She says, voice edging with hysteria. Peter feels his heart sink in his chest. He never wanted this.

But he can’t lie to her now, not when she looks at him like that. So he looks away from her face and nods his head, trying to ignore as a sob wrenches free from her throat “And I punished you for that!” she cries. He wants to reach out to comfort her, but his hands are glued by his side. There’s a part of him that feels the weight lifting off his chest as he comes clean, the other half furious for making May upset.

“With prolonged use of substances like that, you run the risk of withdrawal. We will all be here with you through it. It won’t be nice Peter, you need to understand that withdrawals can be very damaging” the doctor says gently.

“Is there anything we can do to help him?” Tony asks, his voice with a slight quake. Peter had seen

the headlines when he had been younger. He knew Tony was familiar with this topic. His heart clenched even further in his chest, knowing he was putting Tony through it again, but also relieved to know that someone who had been through it could help him too.

“Ideally we would put a person back on morphine and slowly bring back the dosage to prevent a withdrawal, but with refusing pain medication, unfortunately there isn’t much to be done other to ride it out and manage the symptoms as they come” he says sadly.

Peter sucks in a slightly afraid breath. Hating every moment of this conversation. Feeling ever so like a child as the adults spoke around him.

“Peter, we need to discuss something else. This may be uncomfortable for you, but we need to act quickly on it” he pauses for a moment, gauging Peters confused reaction.

“We found evidence of sexual assault when treating you. The worst of the damage has been repaired, however, given there is still an open investigation we need your consent to run a rape kit to gather all evidence of the assault”

Peter blanches, his mouth dropping, cheeks heating quickly. He jerks his eyes to May, who is staring down, tears rolling down her face, cheeks white and fingers trembling.

“I didn’t – he didn’t” He stumbles.

“Peter it’s okay ...” the doctor tries to soothe. Peter sits up more frantically. “No! You aren’t listening, nothing like that happened! He only hit me... I promise! He didn’t...” His voice is hysteric, he knows. But May could never know that Grant had done *that*.

The look on her face when she looks up is almost hopeful, still just as sad.

Tony takes a step closer, eyes gentle, his face just as pale with concern “Kid...” he says pacifyingly, as if Peter was a wounded animal.

He redoubles his efforts, jerking away from Tonys outstretched hand.

“No. I’m telling you the truth, he didn’t touch me. I don’t consent to the ... to the kit, because

there's nothing to test!" He says sharply, glaring at the doctor, begging him to believe.

"You're in a safe place now Peter. You can tell the truth. You aren't going to get into trouble" the doctor tries to reassure.

Peter groans in frustration "Why don't you believe me! I would know if he did that, and he didn't! I wouldn't let him!"

The doctor still looks unconvinced "Peter you were naked when you came here, there was internal bleeding, fractures... all leading towards sexual assault"

He falters for a second, eyes flicking to May again, grasping for a lie to appease her.

"He didn't do that!" he says again stubbornly, frantically.

"Peter are you sure? Was there any time you weren't aware, you know you were drugged..."

Tony cuts the doctor off, surprising everyone. "Doc enough. If he said he wasn't, then he wasn't." Peter looks up shocked, his chest rising and falling as he catches his breath. He quickly covers his emotions and looks back at May, her face has gained a little bit of colour, there's that hopefulness that Peter is desperate to see more of.

"I think he's had enough for today, he needs to rest if he's going to get any better" Tony adds, Peter sagging in relief that he had successfully averted that conversation. Tony gives him a look however that gives Peter the impression that they had a lot more to talk about. He shudders under the stare, sinking back into the pillows. The doctor nods, promising to return soon to check up on Peter again before leaving.

"Do you mind if I have a second with the kid?" Tony says quietly to May. May glances up confused, eyes darting between Tony and Peter, looking for a reason. She stands and nods mutely, pressing a kiss to Peter's head before walking out of the room, closing the door probably a bit harder than necessary.

"Peter."

“Don’t.” Peter cuts off. “I know what you are going to say. He didn’t do that okay, why don’t you believe me?”

“Because you can’t lie to me. I saw the bag of clothes *you* put together. I found you naked and bleeding. I watched you kick and scream bloody murder as people touched you when you woke up, and I had to listen to that sick bastard boast about it” he growls.

“So drop the bravado. You don’t need to play the hero anymore Peter. You need to let us help you now” his voice dropping softer as he moves to the bed, sitting down facing Peter.

Peter clenched his jaw tight looking up and over Tonys shoulder. Suddenly furious.

“You don’t understand” Peter grits out. “It wasn’t like that”

“Stop protecting him!” Tony yells, Peter flinches back, hitting the wall behind him.

“It’s not him I’m protecting!” Peter seethes back.

“Then who is it? Huh? Who do you have to protect so badly that you can’t see how ridiculous you are being refusing treatment and lying to your doctor! Because as far as I can see, the only one you are covering for is *him*”

“You think I want this!” Peter yells suddenly. Eyes fiery, hands gripped tight enough for his nails to sink into his palms. “You think I *wanted* him to hurt me? I’m protecting May from knowing that the person she loved could do this! I was protecting all the other kids he used against me to keep my mouth shut. I protected *you* from being arrested when he threatened to call you a pervert!” he screams. “And *none of you* protected *me*” his voice breaks pathetically. “I was the one who was beaten. I was the one who was drugged and humiliated and held down as he took *everything* from me.” His breath is jagged now, sharp and uneven. Eyes wild with unshed tears.

Tony leaps forward, wrapping his arms around Peters shaking body. Peter fights it at first, furious, but his fight doesn’t last long. He collapses into the embrace, sobs wracking his body.

He can feel Tonys sobs too, wet and broken just like his own.

“I’m sorry I didn’t see it. I should have seen it, and I didn’t” Tony murmurs into his hair.

Peter just cries in response.

“It hurt so much” his voice cracks. “I’ve never felt so *hurt* before”. He’s not even sure why he was confessing. But a dam was opening, and the words begun to tumble.

“He just kept hurting me and hurting me. *I wanted to die Tony*. I begged him to kill me” he sobs, hands fisting in Tonys shirt. Tony pulls him even closer, until he is being practically cradled. His sobs are muffled into the fabric of Tony shirt, soaked with his tears.

Tony apologises over and over again, hands soothingly rubbing down Peter spine. When they part, Peter feels a tiredness that runs bones deep.

“Peter, nobody is going to force you to do the kit if you really don’t want to. It’s just for evidence sake. But you can’t pretend that it never happened. I wish it didn’t, and I wish you didn’t have to talk about it... but if you don’t... it will eat you up kid. No one here is judging you. We just want you to heal” his voice quiet, not a hint of demand behind the words, his hand still holding the back of Peters head into his shoulder.

Peter *does* want to forget. Desperately wants to never think about it again. He doesn’t want to ever relive that terror.

But Tony was right. Already denying it was eating away at his insides. Keeping this secret bottled up for any longer was going to rip him apart. He just wanted to be okay again. “Will you stay with me?” he asks softly, horrified at himself for asking Tony to go through something so humiliating with him.

“I’m not going anywhere kiddo” Tony responds immediately, hand tightening its hold on Peters curls protectively.

A female nurse is brought in upon Peters quiet request, she explains everything in a soft manner, making sure Peter knew what was going to be happening at all times.

He clenched his fists and closed his eyes in embarrassment as she listed off the steps to the exam, promising to do them all as quick and painless as possible. A hand cups his clenched fist, reflexively he relaxes into the older man's palm, entwining their fingers and taking a deep breath.

Tony's free hand brushes Peter's hair out of his face soothingly. "You're so strong Peter. Stronger than me. I'm so proud of you" he murmurs. Peter doesn't believe him. But the words help him relax further, trying to be strong like Tony thought he was.

"I'm going to start with some questions, really simple ones okay? I need you to answer as best as you can. If you can't that's okay too" she says gently.

Peter nods his head, eyes still closed. She asks him questions that he answers through clenched teeth. Were you penetrated anally? *Yes*. Were you penetrated orally? *Yes*. Was a condom used? *No*.

He feels the slight tremors in Tony's hand, despite the man trying to conceal it. His own hands are shaking.

The physical examination is much worse. The nurse is an angel, whispering and using gentle touches. But it doesn't help enough. Tears leak out his eyes, hand in a crushing grip, breaths puffing out of his chest.

He was humiliated, ashamed.

Every swap dragged over the bite marks, scratches, patches of skin that hadn't been cleaned... he felt dirty. The internal examinations lasted only a second, but he could feel the exposure making his heart slam horribly against his rib cage.

Tony stays through it all. Gripping his hand just as tightly back. Muttering praises and cursing under his breath each time a new injury is found. They let their hands go only for a moment as his nails are clipped and cleaned.

He's never felt more like a victim in his life.

...

Peter can feel himself slipping. The pain whirling through his body, the shame of everyone knowing, the helplessness of being trapped on another bed... it was too much.

His frustrations were rising the longer he was able to stay awake, making him irritated and horribly depressed all at the same time.

May sitting next to him, tears in her eyes, apologising, hurt the worst. It was like a thousand knives in his chest knowing it was his fault. She shouldn't be apologising when it was only him to blame. But she couldn't hear that. She wouldn't listen to him when he tried to refuse her beg for forgiveness. He had broken her.

If only he had fought harder earlier, if he had said something in the beginning before it had escalated, before he had made this mess... then May wouldn't look so horribly devastated. So burdened with his failure.

He knows she blames herself, for bringing Grant into their home, but he doesn't know how to tell her she never really made that choice. Grant had manipulated her from day one. How could he tell someone they had been deceived like that? She would only blame herself for falling for it.

There's an ugly ball of hate sitting deep in his stomach though. Furious at her for falling for it. Furious she locked him in that house with a monster and handed Grant the key. Why wasn't she happy with just Peter. Why did she have to bring someone else into their perfect lives? *Why didn't she notice?*

He tries to swallow the thoughts with guilt, but they persevere, sitting higher and higher in his throat the longer he watches her sniff back tears and flinch each time the doctor addresses an injury or opens the bandages on his body.

He tries to tell her to wait outside when things like that happen, but he learnt his own stubbornness from her, and she stays beside him.

When they take out the stitches inside of him, she does leave the room, face green and hand clamped over her mouth.

Peter feels sickened with himself. He was filthy, and she knew it.

The anger and irritation bubbles higher in his body, blood boiling with it. He didn't know where this ugly side of him had come from? Why he was so mad at her, at everyone. Furious for everyone making him feel like the helpless trauma victim that he was.

His internal raged monologue is caught short by Tony, accompanied by 2 men walking in the room.

He immediately sits up straighter, eyes locked on the strangers cautiously, shifting only to give Tony a confused look.

Tonys face is pinched, tense. He approaches the bed warily, sitting gingerly beside Peter. Peter keeps his eyes glued on the intruders, their large broad shoulders, their strong jaws and hard eyes. A shiver runs through him dangerously.

“Pete, I’ve held them off as long as I could, but they need to talk to you. I’m not going to leave you okay? I’m going to sit here the whole time and if you want them to go I will make sure they do okay?” Tony says slowly, hands fisted. His face looks strained, as if he knew something Peter didn’t. The officers make a noise to show their disliking of the situation, of having Tony stay. Tony pays them no mind.

He looks between Tonys face and the men, who stand at the edge of the bed. He can feel the tension in his body heighten. His spider-senses fizzling uselessly at the nape of his neck in a weak warning.

“Peter, we work for the police department, we are here to gather your statement on the events that transpired four days ago” one of the men say, pad and pen in hand, face stony and cold.

Peters hands tremor, he shifts slightly trying to ease his discomfort. All he can think though is how easily these men could overpower him, especially like this, where he was weak already, too pained to defend himself.

“*Mr. Stark* has informed us that your Aunts partner was the one who attacked you? Is that correct?” He asks gruffly. Peter picks up the clear distaste towards Tonys name. It reminded him of how Grant used to say the name.

Peter nods his head, his mouth dry and glued shut.

“The evidence from your sexual assault exam will testify this?”



Peter nods silently.

The officers grit their jaws, showing the first signs of being frustrated with Peters lack of response.

“Can you explain the events that took place in the cabin in the woods?”

Peter looks at Tony desperately. He doesn't want to go through this. Just voicing it to his family was hard, to these strangers would be horrifying. His skin crawled as they watched him intently, eyebrows raised as they waited for him to speak.

“Grant, he uh” Peter clears his throat weakly, trying to steady his breathing. Why had no one given him warning this was going to happen? Why did he feel so ambushed?

“He told me we were going to a holiday lodge, as a birthday present. He drugged me in the car, and when I woke up we were in the cabin. He... pushed me around a bit, and he...” Peter stops to swallow. The lump in his throat enlarging.

“and he?” The officer prompts.

“He assaulted me” Peter says, voice softer, eyes downcast in shame. “He assaulted me over the course of the week, and then I escaped, which is where I called Ton- Mr. Stark for help”

The officer squints his eyes, writing down messily on the paper. The other officer keeps his stare toward the pair. “I'm just trying to understand Peter, if you were able to escape, why did it take you a week to do so?”

Peter feels shame pooling in his stomach. Why *didn't* he escape sooner?

“I tried, on the first day, but he chained me to the bed after that.” He says slowly, aware that Tony would know he could have broken those chains if he wanted. He can't remember why he didn't.

“Did Mr. Bates inflict any injuries on you?” The officer asks, head down, pen raised, ready to record the reply.

“You mean other than the assault?” Tony says coldly, eyes hard as he stares at the men.

“Other than the assault” the officer clarifies snarkily.

Peter feels at a loss. Why were these men so defensive and unkind just because of their clear dislike towards Tony? The sudden ugly surge of fury rises up his throat, eyes hard as he stares at the officers challengingly.

“He whipped me with a metal rod, threw me into a fire, locked me in a freezer, drugged me up to my eyeballs, strangled me, broke my ribs, bruised my kidney, tore my -” he stops his angry rant. Somewhat pleased that the officers look more pale now, finally reacting how decent people should. He can’t finish the sentence though, his anger dispersing and the bubbling fear replacing it of having snapped.

Tony places his hands on Peters to steady their shaking, his face is a mix of emotions, obviously shocked at Peters confession, and mad about their company’s attitudes.

The officers shift uncomfortably, a slight tinge of anger at being spoken to in that way showing on their faces. Peter shrinks back in anticipation to their response.

“Was this the first time Mr. Bates had assaulted you?”

Peter shakes his head. “No, he had been physical with me for almost a year, and *assaulting* me for over a month prior”

The officer looks up confused. “So why did you leave with him in the first place? Why didn’t you tell your aunt? Or Mr. Stark here?”

Peter blanches, mind scrambling as his own demons were laid out in front of him by these men.

Tony’s face darkens in anger “I hardly think that’s an appropriate thing to ask officer. This man was a master manipulator. You think a teenager would be able to match that?” he says darkly.

Peter feels a flicker of hope simmer in his chest at the defence. It helps to ebb away slightly at his guilt.

“I was afraid of what he would do if I told anyone, If I didn’t go with him. He threatened to hurt other people if I didn’t do what he asked.” He admits. The officer nods, his face still impassive.

“And did he?” The officer asks.

“Did he what?”

“Did he hurt anyone else?”

“He messed with my Aunts car, causing her to have an accident when he found out I was planning to tell someone” Peter grits out, his anger simmering back to the surface at the tasteless way this was being handled.

“So your Aunt was injured, and you still didn’t come forward? Despite her life now being in danger?” The officer snorts back, eyes darkening. Peter flinches, jaw dropping at the statement. He had kept her *out* of danger by not speaking up after that.

“I think that’s enough” Tony cuts in angrily.

“Just a couple more questions Mr Stark. We are trying to get this story straight” he retorts.

“Mr Parker would you say you provoked Mr Bates? By you not seeking help or fighting, you may have confused him in your consent?”

Bile rises in Peter throat. He was going to be sick.

“Did you ever say no?” The officer prods.

“You need to leave, now!” Tony stands.

Peter desperately thinks back to his months of torment. Had he ever said no? Or had he just given what Grant had wanted, too afraid to refuse. He remembered screaming no in the cabin, when no one was around to hear it. Had he waited too long to say those two letters? Would this have happened if he had?

He looks up, tears in his eyes, mouth open with no words to say.

The officer takes that as his answer, writing on the pad with an unreadable expression.

“This is ridiculous. I’ll be having a word with your supervisors, you assholes” Tony seethes, stepping closer dangerously.

*He never said no.*

“We need to speak with you as well Mr. Stark. How about we step into the corridor.” Their faces quipped with a smirk.

Peter finds the strength to shake his head, hand reaching out to take Tonys. “Don’t leave” he whispers pathetically.

Tony looks conflicted, obviously wanting these people away from Peter. But Peter needed Tony right now more than he needed those men to leave.

He eventually gives in, nodding his head and sitting back on the bed. He raises his chin to the officers. “If you need to speak to me, you can say it here. And then you can get the fuck away from here” he says lowly.

Peter winces at the tone. He had only heard that tone once before. And Tony was speaking to Grant.

“Very well. Our men went looking for Mr. Bates after you reported him a suspect. We returned to the cabin that was identified as the place where Mr. Parker had been held and we found human remains amongst a fire pit. You wouldn’t happen to know where you were at approximately 5.30pm four days ago?”

Their faces are somewhat pleased, as if they had caught a pot of gold.

Peter looks between the men confused. Human remains? The cabin?

“Remains?” He asks meekly, trying to understand.

“Yes Peter, we found remains we have identified at Mr. Bates. Burnt to death” their voices are hard, calculating. Peters body goes cold.

Grant was dead.

“The bastard probably killed himself. Justice served.” Tony grits out.

“A little too obvious isn’t it? What I see is, you knew where the cabin was located, you were obviously fuelled by the rage of someone close to you being injured, and you look like you have recently been in a fight... seems pretty incriminating if you ask us”

They pause to watch Tonys face tighten.

“I think we should take you back with us to the station to continue this conversation, don’t you?” the officer continues, stepping forward threateningly.

“Mr. Stark was in an altercation in this very room. He acted in Peters defence when Mr. Bates attempted to strangle him, and a fight ensued. Mr. Bates escaped our custody, and I myself treated Mr. Starks injuries. He has not left these premises once. Now, if you have no further questions, I’ll ask you kindly to leave my patient alone now.” The doctor, like a guardian angel, stands in the door way, face hard and determined.

The officers straighten, and look as though they wanted to rebut, instead, they nod their heads and purse their lips in distain. “We will be in touch” they announce as they exit the room.

Tony looks at the doctor gratefully, Peter tries to put the pieces together. His mind was spinning at a hundred miles an hour.

Grant was dead.

*He never said no.*

He feels like he should feel some sort of remorse to finding out a man who had been in his life for over a year had died so brutally. But he remembers the flames of the fire licking at his skin. The feeling of his skin melting and sizzling horribly. He can't find it in him to mourn. He only feels regret at not having been there to see it.

May sweeps into the room, her eyes as usual red rimmed and glassy. She presses a kiss to his head and begins to ask him about the officers. Peter can't respond, he's too caught up in his own thoughts.

Hot bubbling disgust was sitting in his stomach. All this time he had tried to blame Grant for his suffering, but all along it was always his fault. He had never told Grant no. Each time he had given himself to Grant without a fight. Was he the perverted one, seducing Grant and leading him to act out in the cabin when Peter finally said no?

Is that why Grant wanted to keep him?

How could May ever look at him again?

"May, I need you to leave" He says suddenly. His voice sounds far away, foreign to his own ears.

She stops speaking mid-sentence, looking at him confused. "Do you need something Peter?" she asks, moving closer to him.

"I don't want you here. Can you please leave" his voice shakes, and he doesn't look her in the eye. He couldn't face her after what he had done. He was disgusting, she shouldn't be forced to stay around once she knew that.

"What do you mean honey? Where is this coming from? If I did something to upset you..." Her voice is becoming more panicked, watery. He can see Tony and the doctor stare at him with similar levels of confusion.

“I can’t look at you without thinking of him!” in his head he knows what he means. He means he asked for this, and he was hurting her because of it. But he also knows how it sounds when it leaves his mouth, vicious and harsh.

She falters, hesitates before reaching out for him.

“Peter, you don’t - ”

“Please just *go!*” he near shouts. She startles back, eyes wide, tears brimming.

“Peter” Tony approaches.

He ignores them both, turning on his side, back to the occupants. He shuts his eyes, closed hard enough to see stars, biting his lips to stop himself from blurting out apologies. He needed May to be mad at him. Needed her to hate him now so she wouldn’t be so hurt when she found out.

Found out he never said no.

“If you want me to go, I’ll go. But I will come back as soon as you want me to okay?” Mays soft wet voice sounds behind him. He keeps his eyes and mouth shut, waiting for her to leave.

She lets out a shaky breath, and then she is gone.

He feels his heart pound and rip inside of him. This was what he wanted. People to hate him for what he had done.

The room is silent, Peter hears conversation outside of the room. “He’s already experiencing the signs of withdrawal, it’s common for patients to become irritated, frustrated, hostile, aggressive... you throw in unspeakable aftermath of trauma, it’s no question that mentally, Peter is unstable” the doctor whispers in a hushed tone. Peter feels his cheeks heat. He wasn’t unstable. He was fine, he was healing.

“The officers that took his statement riled him up a bit May, he’ll come back to his senses soon and he will want you back in there” Tony tries to explain. Peter can hear Mays quiet tears, he feels

horrible. “When he wants me back, I’ll be back. I see him look at me Tony, like he’s trying to hide his pain, his suffering. He’s never wanted me to worry about him when he is hurt, but now, it’s just stopping him from getting better.” She sobs out. Neither men disagree. Everyone by now had tried to reason with Peter about concealing his injuries when she was in the room.

“Look after him okay. He loves you more than you know. Make sure he knows I’m not leaving because I’m mad at him”

Peter tunes the rest of the conversation out. He lets his own tears fall and gather silently into the pillow, hands gripped so tightly his fingers begin to cramp.

This was for the best.

...

They take out the final tubes the next day. His fluids and nutrients. He feels relieved at no longer being ‘chained’ to the bed. Feels more free with nothing tying him down anymore.

He feels his body mending together, but his mind was breaking.

He tried to put on a front for Tony and the doctors, gritting his teeth as they changed his bandages, cleaned the still open wounds, took out stitches. He was in a world of pain and it was taking its toll.

The headaches were becoming harder to deal with, migraines that felt like his head was exploding, like his body was on fire. He didn’t tell anybody about them. Stubbornly kept his mouth shut and pretended he was fine.

*He was far from fine.*

The fever courses its way through him. He hears ‘withdrawal’ being thrown around by people in the room, trying to make him as comfortable as possible. Tony sits beside him, holding a wet cloth to his sweaty forehead, whispering affirmations, telling Peter he could do it, he could pull through. Peter whines and cries as the shakes run through him. He begs for relief, begs for it to end. His body was trying to kill him. After all he had survived, now it was trying to finish him. He gripped onto Tony desperately, sobbed as his body fluctuated with heat.



A nurse came towards him on the other side, glass held in her hand as she pressed it against his dry lips.

Peter only sees Grant.

His hands fly out, the water sailing through the air before clattering to the floor. The nurse lets out a shocked squeak, cradling her wrist to her chest, backing away quickly. Peter feels immediately terrible, he tries to apologise, but another wave of nausea and splitting head pain rushes through him and he throws his head back in a groan.

“Kid drink something” Tony pleads, another glass held in his hand.

Peter shakes his head rigorously. He doesn’t want any drugs, he can ride this out. They said he could ride this out. The sweat pours down into his eyes, so he clenches them closed. Maybe this was his punishment. This is what he deserved for what he had done. For letting Grant hurt him, for pushing May away, for inadvertently killing Grant and not feeling any remorse.

Eventually his body tired after the worst of it, slumping in exhaustion he finally manages to take his first steady breaths of the day.

The surrounding professionals begin to filter out of the room, leaving strict instructions to call if he got worse again and to keep his fluids up. Eventually it’s just him and Tony in the room. He keeps his eyes closed, hoping Tony believes his feigned sleep, wanting to be alone. Tony buys it. For whatever reason. Maybe he was just as exhausted, having been handling Peter’s breakdowns all day, sleeping on the small couch, probably dealing with his own guilt.

He leaves Peter alone, moving out into the corridor and shutting the door quietly behind him. Peter sits up as soon as he’s sure no one is around, grimacing in pain as he does.

Tears were already pooling in his eyes. His head was spinning with dizziness, mind crippled with grief. He was a failure. He was weak and broken and he was never going to be healed.

He had hurt May in the worst way. He was slowly but surely breaking Tony. He was hurting the other doctors and nurses, he had angered the policemen.

*He didn't say no.*

A sob catches in his throat. He wanted the pain to be over. He didn't want to live like this anymore.

Why hadn't Grant killed him in the cabin? Why had he left him to suffer?

Peter stumbles out of the bed, his casted leg screaming in protest, his slowly knitting together injuries pulling harshly, almost causing him to fall.

He pushed on.

He ended up on the floor, legs giving way after days on not being used, or really weeks. He half crawled, half dragged himself to the small bathroom in his room. Pulling himself up and inside, finally feeling himself able to catch his breath.

He turns to lock the bathroom door, grateful for small mercies that he was put in a room with a lock. He heaves his body up to stare at the mirror. His face was gaunt, yellowish and still bruised and cut. There were stitches still in his face, some dark bruises still looking fresh on his hollowed cheeks.

He was a stranger to himself.

Tears dripped out of his eyes, blurring his vision. He was a mess. He was disgusting. He could still feel the touches on his skin. Grants hands roaming over his body like he owned it. The phantom pains in his backside sparking up his lower back made him stagger over to the basin, a mixture of bile and spit expelling from his mouth, swirling down the drain.

Too many thoughts and emotions were rampaging through him. The crawling feeling of Grants hands, the weight of his burden, the shame of everyone knowing his humiliation, the policemen's cruelty, he never said no.

One thought spirals faster than the rest, sticking and cementing itself in the centre of his mind.

*He wished he had died in that cabin.*

The fever was sitting behind his eyes, the pain of his injuries was wearing on him, and he wanted it to be over.

His fist acting under its own command plunged forward into the mirror, shards of reinforced glass fell down in front of him immediately.

Peters hand clasps onto a jagged piece, his hands shaking and fist already collecting blood.

His knees give out, leaving him to slide down onto the floor, pressing his back against the cool tile walls.

He could hear muffled voices outside of the door, hands were banging and slamming onto the wood frantically, but he couldn't focus on them. Tears streamed down his pale cheeks, hands shaking even more violently now. He raised the sharp glass, other hand laid bare and waiting.

He could end this all now. He could leave this pain and suffering behind.

The odd sense of frenzied calmness was ripped from him as the bathroom door wrenched open, Tony stumbling in violently. His eyes wild and face red as his eyes fell on Peter.

His movement was so quick Peter could barely process it. One minute he was looking at the man in the doorway, the next he was behind Peter, Peters back pressed to his chest.

The shard was discarded, Peter cried out as he watched his escape clatter farther away from him. Tonys hands wrapped tightly around Peters chest to stabilize him, holding him down.

Peter throws his body against the offending arms, struggles and shouts to get away. He wanted to end this, he wanted this to be over.

Sobs and cries of frustration pour out of his mouth, he kicks and shoves against Tony to no avail. Other people are trying to aid but he can hear Tony shouting them away, holding Peter tighter.

“Let me go!” Peter screams through his teeth, squirming desperately. “I want to go! I don’t want to do it anymore” he wails, voice hysteric. Tony squeezes him tighter. “I’m not letting you go Pete, I’m not losing you!” he shouts back over Peters heavy sobs.

Peter pushes and wriggles harder, body desperate to finish what it had started.

“Don’t let him win, don’t let him beat you” Tony grits into his ear. “Fight it Peter, I know you can”

Grant had already won, hadn’t he? He had taken everything from Peter.

“I can’t, I don’t want to be in pain anymore, I don’t want to be like this, I’ve got nothing left” Peter wails back, his voice high and breathless.

“You’ve got me”

Peter stops his struggling, reality slamming back into him. He was going to leave Tony? The person that found him in hell and pulled him back out? The only person who had stayed?

*He had Tony.*

Grant had tried to take that away from him, but he fought back, he never let Tony go. Tony was there with him in that cabin, comforting him in the darkest moments. And Tony had saved him.

Tony deserved to know the truth.

“I didn’t say no” he whimpers, slumping back into the arms. His body shakes with his sobs, all his pain crashing into him at once.

Tony hesitates for a second before taking a breath. “You shouldn’t need to. No doesn’t have to be spoken. No can be your tears, your coerced consent, your lack of saying yes” he says strongly.

Peters heart beats harder in his chest.

He may not have said no.

But he never said yes.

Overcome with grief, Peter lets out a pitiful cry, *I'm sorry* bumbling out of his mouth. Tony only holds tighter, shushing him into his hair, rocking him back and forth on the floor.

Peter closes his eyes.

...

Waking up with a gasp, Peter tries to shake off the horrible nightmare. His hair sticks to his head with the sweat, a deep tremble already setting in his bones.

"Hey, you're alright" Tony gentles. Peter takes in his appearance, dark black bags under his red rimmed eyes, a sickly pale hue to his skin... he looked the worst Peter had ever seen him. "Are you?" Peter says, eyebrow raised, concern rising the more his body awakened.

"Seen better days. You want to talk about what happened earlier?" he retorts, own eyebrow raised. It looks like he's trying to come across with snark, but he only looks desperately upset.

Peter shakes his head, cheeks heating with embarrassment. Another thing he had screwed up. "Not particularly" he mumbles. Tony doesn't seem to take that answer as seriously as Peter would have hoped, puffing out a harsh laugh. "I wasn't giving you an option. What's going on in your head Pete? You gotta help me here. I don't know how to help you if you won't talk to me"

Peter feels his heart clench tightly, a story to cover himself sitting in his mouth sourly. For months he had been suffering in silence. Having to lie and bite his tongue and spread his legs. He was sick of it.

"I feel worthless" he admits quietly. Tony doesn't respond, his eyes urging Peter to continue. Peter takes a deep breath. "I just, I'm *Spiderman* you know? And he made me feel like I was nobody. Nothing. But I kept telling myself, I'm worth something, I'm protecting others by keeping him focused on me" he scoffs bitterly.

“But in that cabin. I *was* nothing. He broke me, and he knew it. I sit in this bed, and I feel like I’m still handcuffed to that mattress. The doctors wrap my burns and I feel like its him tearing my clothes off me. Every time someone calls me a victim, I feel like that’s all I will ever be”

He takes a shaky breath to steady himself. “I’m weak, and I don’t see myself getting any better” he shrugs, toying with the sheets threads, trying to avoid Tonys gaze.

“So you thought dying was your only option?” The way Tony says it, it doesn’t feel accusatory, just curious. Peter shrugs again ashamed. “I don’t know, maybe? I’m just so tired of feeling like this. Of feeling like I’ll never get his hands off me”

“Pete, I thought you were the strongest kid, long before Grant came into your life, and I still do. Nothing has changed that. Not that bastard, not what happened to you, and not what this aftermath has done to you. Nothing.”

He dips his head to force Peters determined down cast eyes on his.

“You are not a victim. You are a survivor.”

The word bounces around in his head, a warm shiver coursing down his spine the longer it replayed in his mind. *Survivor*.

“Can you promise me the next time you get that low in your head, you come to me first?” Tony asks seriously, his hand coming around to the back of Peters head, pressing their foreheads together. Peter nods softly. “I’m sorry I scared you” he murmurs, tears stinging the back of his eyelids. “You permanently scare me kid” Tony teases back, eyes still glistening with tears himself.

“I saw you, in the cabin” he says quietly, Tonys head jerking up in surprise.

“The drugs he gave me, they made me see things, sometimes people, other times just shapes. But you were there a lot. You sat beside me and you told me to survive. You told me to live. Every day I gave up, you didn’t let me. You may think you didn’t help me, but you did. Every day in the woods, every day since.” He says with conviction.

“You saved my life.” he adds, giving a watery smile.

Tonys eyes betray him greatly, so expressive in their sadness, guilt, grief. “And I always will” he says with conviction.

Peter pulls back reluctantly, sliding down the bed until his head hit the pillow. He turned his face towards where Tony sat, his elbows on his knees in the horrible plastic chair.

“Can you tell me about your day?” Peter asks tenderly, curling into himself on the bed. Tonys mouth quirks up in a surprised smile. He doesn’t miss another beat, launching into a dramatic telling of the hospital grade coffee and his proposition to buy the hospital just to replace the coffee machine.

It makes Peters face pull into a smile, something that felt so foreign on his face. He didn’t dare tell Tony he knew the older man had not left his bedside in days.

As the story comes to a dramatic close, Peter smiles contently. Body melting into the pillows. Theres a final thought nagging at the back of his mind that he needed expelled. He turns his eyes to Tony, catching his attention.

“Tony. Did you go looking for Grant? After he...” he gestures out.

Tony pauses for a long moment, taking a deep breath and looking down. “I’m not going to lie to you kid. I found him in the cabin. He had gotten spooked by the police getting his statement and his facts not adding up. He was trying to burn the evidence when I found him”

“Did you kill him?” Peter already knows the answer, but he desperately needs to hear it for himself.

Tony looks up warily, his eyes betray every emotion he was feeling. “I did.”

Peter looks for his reaction within himself, unsure of how he should be feeling. He comes up with nothing but relief.

“Thank you” he says gently. Tony smiles weakly, it doesn’t reach his eyes. They share a moment in silence, digesting the conversations revelations.

“Can we go home? Back in the city?” Peter asks eventually. Despite feeling connected and grateful to the staff here, he wanted nothing more to be back in the tower, surrounded by his old life, the old him.

“Yeah Pete. If thats what you want.”

For the first time Peter feels his chest lighten. Even though Grant had come into his life like a tornado, reaping destruction and unspeakable pain, Tony was always and always would be his shelter.

He knew he was never really going to be okay. But right now, with Tony by his side, his Aunt waiting for him back home, and his own determination to be a survivor not a victim, he would heal.

It was a long road ahead, one so long he couldn’t see the end. But that’s the thing about hindsight, it always starts off as foresight.

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## Chapter End Notes

:)

Thank you again for the amazing support on this work! I’ve been so humbled and amazed by the people who have commented and messaged me! Thank you thank you!!!

The sequel is already in the works, going further into the recovery over the long term! See you all there!

As always- come yell your feelings at me at [ironwebbs.tumblr](https://ironwebbs.tumblr.com)

Please let me just PSA that the way I have written Peters experience with the police does not, in anyway, depict how actual police treat sexual assault survivors. As someone who has not only worked closely with police organisations and have had people go through the process, I know how amazing the staff that will support you are. The arc that I had fit into this story was one that the Police had immediate disliking to Tony, as well as their ulterior motive to arrest him, and did not then do their job as it should have been done, and thus treating Peter the way he was. This is a gross exaggeration to fit with my narrative, and is completely unrealistic and untrue. Please understand that this is not how it works, and is purely fictional.



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